NEXT WEEK SPECIAL BIG LEDGER AND BLADE PROSPERITY ISSUE
THEY WILL BE STUFFED WITH GOOD THINGS. DON'T FAIL TO GET THEM

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAUGHTER

OR THE FEMALE OF THE SPECIES

By Vincent Oswald.

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PART I.

"I THINK it's Venus!" murmured the woman, gazing thoughtfully at the star.

"I don't care a hang what it is!" said the man, staring fixedly at the woman.

She turned and looked questioningly into his eyes. For several moments he silently contemplated the picture she made against the dark background of thick foliage, as she stood there on the gravel path, with the softly brilliant rays of the full moon shimmering upon the limpid waters of the peaceful lake beside her, and falling caressingly on her upturned, inquiring face. Then he clasped the face between his two palms, and bent his head till his lips touched the forehead.

"Not a hang! Not a pic-ayune!" he insisted, passionately. "My happiness is right here—where you are!—not in the distant heavens. And, as for stars! Why, Jess, I know a pair of them that not only outshine Venus, but contain within their depths all the wonders of a beautiful, human soul."

"Silly boy!" she whispered. "You're in love!"

"How in the world did you ever guess it?" he queried, in mock wonder, as he folded his arms about her.

"Now, see here!" she retorted, playfully boxing his ear as she freed herself. "You mustn't suppose that just because I've said 'Yes,' you can bully me unmercifully and be supremely foolish. Come, let's try to be serious grown folks, and talk sensibly of real things. How are those 'children' of yours getting along? You haven't told me anything about them for some time."

He smiled indulgently, and compromised with her whim by drawing her arm so far within his own that he could keep her hand clasped in both his; with the result that the moon, finding it impossible to trace two shadows on the path before them, had to content itself, forsooth, with an uncouth blur of double width—and of contour so unsuggestive of human outline that it must have been a sore trial to the artistic instincts of the lunar silhouettist.

But the woman's remark had had the desired effect; for his face grew grave, and he murmured reflectively:

"Children! My children! Yes, that's just how I regard them, Jess; for their utter lack of responsibility and resource makes them pathetically dependent."

He paused, and they strolled on in silence. But the seed she had sowed must have fallen upon fertile soil, for soon he voluntarily resumed:

"Some of them are truly pitiable—totally incompetent to manage their own affairs; consequently, they must be regarded as children, and treated as such. When they have a little money in hand, their first impulse is to spend it for drink, instead of meeting the necessities of their families. Then, after a night of dissipation, they usually fail to appear next day for work; thus, the situation is made still worse—both for themselves and the company. Of course, this doesn't happen with each individual often enough to warrant his permanent discharge; but, among so many employes, it seems as though I always have some such case on my hands. I don't believe for a moment that our men are any worse than others—if as bad; it's just characteristic of the class."

"And I suppose, Dick, it's usually worse after a holiday, isn't it?"

Though the genuine sympathy of her tone was adulterated with a touch of deliberate design to draw him out, the man remained oblivious to the fact in his complete absorption in a topic which evidently lay very close to his heart.

"Yes," he acquiesced gloomily, speaking as if to himself; "it's much worse after a holiday. For instance, last Christmas, the company's business being in a condition that enabled us to take the step, we gave the men a double holiday—the day before, as well as the day itself. Moreover, with more good will than judgment, we made up the pay-roll and let them have their money in advance. The morning after Christmas, nearly a quarter of the force failed to report for work, and many of those that did appear were in an incapable condition and absolutely penniless."

"It's too bad that with your many years of experience, you didn't foresee that," she murmured, matching his own meditative, impersonal tone, yet stealing a keen, surreptitious glance at his thoughtful face.

"Oh, I foresaw it," he went on, his semi-abstraction undisturbed by her soft interjection. "Yes, and I warned Markley against it, explaining just what might be expected, and doing my best to dissuade him; but he was so immovably bent upon paying the men in full before the double holiday, and 'doing the boys a good turn,' as he phrased it, that he couldn't recognize the danger; so of course I, as superintendent, had no alternative but to execute the wishes of the general manager."

"Couldn't or wouldn't?" she muttered, under her breath.

"What were you saying, Jess?"

"I was thinking that Markley's determination probably made just as much trouble as though it were malevolent instead of benevolent."

"Oh, of course; the result is the same in either case. Well, before noon of the day after Christmas, Jim Blake came in and pleaded piteously with me for the loan of a dollar; and when I asked him what had become of his pay envelope, he couldn't look me in the face. 'For God's sake, Mr. Benton,' said he, 'indulge me this time, for there's not a mouthful of food in our house!' 'Jim,' said I, 'you're too full of whisky yet for me to feel safe in taking your word; but if your wife comes here and tells me the same thing, I'll believe her.' Before the day was over she came, Jess, distracted and desperate; came with two hungry children by the hand, and begged for bread—just dry bread."

He paused, and she squeezed his hand.

"And you loaned Jim the dollar, Dick?" she asked, softly.

"No."

She glanced up at him unbelievingly, and he added, "But I let his wife have five."

"Through the cashier?"

"Oh, my, no! I can't do such things on behalf of the company, you know; those are purely personal matters be-

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tween me and the hands, on a man to man basis. But they understand that perfectly, and Jim paid me back a dollar a week. He'll probably stay straight, now, until next Christmas—and he's one of the best workmen we have."

"Dick, I was talking the other day to white-haired Bill Mason, the oldest employe in the mills, and he told me that you're 'forever helping the men in their troubles'—lending them money when their own foolishness has brought them to want, procuring positions for their children among your business acquaintances, sending the doctor, at your own expense, to their wives when ill, and visiting the men yourself when they're laid up."

"Pshaw! I've heard that Bill talks in his sleep, Jess."

But she swept on without heeding him. "And Bill told me, too, that the men love you for your pity of their weaknesses and your sympathy with their troubles. Do you hear that, Dick? And do you realize what it means? Those men—those rough, ignorant, miserable mill toilers—love you! Why, Dick, Bill says there are those among them who would willingly die for you at any time if they could serve you by doing so."

"Jess, it's my turn now to admonish you against 'foolish' talk. You must remember that old Bill's years are beginning to tell on him. Anyway, what would you have me do? Badger, bully, and abuse the poor devils?"

"Dick," she said, seriously, "I think it's true that the world gives back to us just what we bestow upon it; and—and those men love you because you love them. Come, confess."

"Oh, I own that I'm fond of the wretches, Jess. I've never made any secret to you of the fact that they're my 'children,' have I? But it's the wives and the little ones who are never out of my mind; the miserable families who starve whenever the men fall from grace. However, I needn't dwell upon that; for your kind ministrations among them, to say nothing of old Bill Mason's evident confidences, make you probably nearly as familiar with that aspect as I am."

"Yes," she said, thoughtfully. "I—I've been talking a great deal to old Bill of late; and he—well, I intend to give yet more of my time to those ministrations."

Then she looked suddenly into his face, and asked with abrupt directness:

"Dick, isn't it strange that father, as president of the company, seems so ignorant of the new, growing discontent among the men; so blind to Markley's subtle duplicity of character; so oblivious to the menace of the innovations that have been made in the old, successful organization?"

She had taken him completely off his guard by her bluntness; but he replied slowly:

"Well—er—you see, Jess, Mr. Richardson, as president, has—has upon his shoulders the responsibility for all the company's extensive affairs, including the financial and the executive departments. That leaves him neither opportunity nor time to attend to these trivial matters of detail."

"And the trivial matter of handling the help he has always left, therefore, entirely to you."

"Y-e-s, until——"

"Until he allowed the arrogance of a plutocratic stockholder to foist this man Markley upon him as general manager of the company, thus placing an incompetent and inimical stranger between himself and you in the control of this little army of workers who have looked to you for years—each of whom you understand as a man understands the fingers of his hands, and some of whom would, as Old Bill says, serve you to the death."

Unable to pursue further, even with her, conversation that hinted, no matter how remotely, at criticism of one who was not only his business superior but her own father, Dick maintained a silence which she was not slow to comprehend. But they had reached her home, and he bade her adieu at the door. As he turned to go, she laid a hand detainingly upon his shoulder.

"Dick," she whispered, her lips close to his ear, "you—you're just a great big, loyal, easy, soft-hearted boy."

"I know it," he admitted, humbly. "Yes, I realize that; but—well, what shall I do about it?"

"Do!" she repeated blankly, as though the possibility of eliminating these traits had never occurred to her.

"Sure! I'm willing to be anything you want me to be.

She shook her forefinger menacingly in his face.

"Don't you dare to do anything!" she admonished, with an emphasis that matched the sudden inconsistency. "Do nothing—absolutely nothing, Dick Benton; unless—unless you wish to tempt me to change that 'Yes' into a 'No.'"

"Ah! that reminds me, Jess," he retorted, smiling, "that nobody yet knows of our engagement; and that we've both agreed it's my duty to speak to your father about the matter at the first opportunity."

Then he left her—with strong intentions regarding this duty, and with no particular reason to ponder the generally accepted fact that "Man proposes, but God disposes."

Three o'clock the following afternoon found Dick standing face to face with the general manager, staring at the latter with palpable astonishment.

"It seems to me a vital mistake, Mr. Markley," he said at last, with courteous frankness.

"No, no," returned Markley quickly, "it's our opportunity. I see by this morning's papers that the United Mills Corporation and the Jopson-Stevens Company have just made a cut of ten per cent in the wages of their men; and with such big fellows setting the pace, we mustn't lose the chance to fall in line. It'll swell our dividends and boost our capital stock."

"But," demurred Dick, "it's a notorious fact that the purblind policies, tyrannical management, and incompetent administration of those companies have lost both concerns an immense amount of business. It's also a fact, with which all our men are familiar, that we have picked up a fair share of that business, as a result of which all our plants have run a full capacity for a year past with not a loom idle, while our competitors have frequently been on half time. Indeed, there has never been a more prosperous and profitable period in the history of our company, yet we are not paying the highest wages our men have ever received from us."

"Humph!" said Markley, with insulting suggestiveness of tone. "You talk as if the wages of the men were more important in your estimation than the interests of your company."

Dick colored and bit his lips.

"I think the two things are inextricably bound up in each other," he replied, simply.

"What reduction are you contemplating?' he went on, picking up a writing tablet. "Ten per cent—the same as the companies you've named?"

"Not on your life!" rasped Markley, vindictively. "We're not as big and rich as they are; so we'll make our cut a straight three cents an hour."

"But that's a fifteen per cent decrease."

"I know it; and they richly deserve it for the trouble they gave us all winter."

"I beg of you not to do it," urged Dick, earnestly; "at least, not in the present absence of the president. Await his return, and have him obtain the approval of the directors, so as to give the matter the weight of their sanction."

"Oh, I provided for all that by discussing it with the president before his departure," retorted Markley, shiftily. "He thoroughly approves of it; and of course you and I know that means the board of directors."

Dick regarded him dubiously, for the whole procedure seemed totally foreign to all he knew of Mr. Richardson's ideas and methods. Markley must have caught the look, for he snarled with brutal provocativeness:

"See here, Benton! you look at me almost as though you disbelieve me. If that's not the case, just tell me candidly whether you're in league with the men or whether you're afraid of them."

The color that had leaped into Dick's face at the first words, fled, leaving it of chalky ghastliness; and, in the nervous clench of his sinewy fingers, the thick tablet in his hands crumpled like a single sheet of paper. It was only the vision of a sweet, upturned face that brought calm words through his locked teeth.

He had scribbled some figures on the tablet, and tearing off the sheet he held it forth to Markley's gaze.

"That's what the reduction will save the company in a year," he explained.

"That's correct," snapped the other; "it's just what I made it—forty thousand dollars. And, Benton, that means exactly two per cent additional profit on the entire capitalization of the company. Two per cent earnings will carry the market price of our stock up at least thirty points higher than at present; so you'd better gobble any stock you can quietly get hold of at present figures."

At this apparent revelation of the sordid, scheming motive animating the contemplated action, a shade of palpable contempt flickered uncontrollably over the superintendent's fine face as he replied:

"I've always taken it for granted, Mr. Markley, that companies, as well as individuals, embark in business and remain in business for one purpose only—profits. As you know, this saving is precisely two weeks' net profit of our company at the present splendid rate of production."

"Your statement's gratuitous. I don't see its application," growled Markley.

"Why, it means two weeks' idleness of our mills would offset the entire year's saving in wages; to say nothing whatever of broken contracts, possible damage suits, destruction of the present pleasant relationship between men and management, and the probable permanent loss of some valuable hands—not speaking, either, of property damage in the worst eventualities."

"What the devil are you driving at, Benton?"

"The men will strike."

The general manager's face turned purple with an emotion too complex to be easily analyzed, and he pounded a fat fist in the palm of his left hand as he shouted fiercely:

"Of course they will if you inspire it! But let them do their worst and be damned to 'em! I'm not afraid of 'em! All I want to know, Benton, is whether you'll post the notices of the reduction or whether you won't."

Had the conversation been a little less bizarre, and Markley's tactics not quite so extraordinary, Dick might not have found it so well within his powers to answer quietly:

"I shall perform my duty, and post the notices if you urge it."

"I do more than that," barked Markley, with exasperating arrogance, "I order it."

"The notices shall be posted immediately," said Dick, grimly, and left the room.

"The man is recklessly drunk with power, greed, or some secret motive which I can't fathom," he muttered, "for he cannot be so stupid as not to realize the tempest he is loosing."

It was only subsequent happenings that enabled Dick to appreciate the significance of the fact that not once during the entire interview had Markley's eye met his.

The next day, sad-faced and heavy-hearted, Dick stood on the great work-floor gazing gloomily around the empty mill and up and down the long rows of silent, deserted looms. Loud voices came from the office, where Markley was in vehement consultation with the president, who had been hastily summoned from a business trip by a frenzied telegram from a panic-stricken director. Presently, Markley stepped to the door and called Dick.

The latter found the president pacing—more literally, rushing up and down the floor like an enraged tiger, swinging his arms in wild gesticulations, and anon shouting incoherent comments and remarks to the general manager. With all due respect to his high qualities and fine traits, it must in truth be admitted that President Richardson was at best a nervous, high-strung man, whose impulsive, tempestuous temperament it was not at all times easy to breast—even in ordinary intercourse.

Dick saw at a glance that the situation had rendered his chief temporarily little better than an insane man; and he guessed that the influence and efforts of Markley—whether designedly or undesignedly—were far from being oil on troubled waters.

An ugly leer rested upon the general manager's saturnine face; and the atmosphere of the office seemed to Dick to be surcharged with a strange, dark ominousness—as when the day grows black with electrical storm-clouds hanging heavily in the air.

It was the first time in the history of the company that a strike of the employes had occurred, and Dick could appreciate the blow which that fact alone must deal the president's pride of executive success.

Mr. Richardson opened upon him characteristically—in whirlwind fashion, like a pent-up tornado.

"You!" he burst forth. "That you should have been such a pin-headed, blithering bungler as to counsel and urge this method of accomplishing the scoundrelly ends which Mr. Markley has been endeavoring to effect. Whatever may have been his ignorance of the result—through his unfamiliarity with our company's history and the psychology of our employes—no man should have known better than you that under present circumstances, a cut in wages would inevitably mean an instant walk-out. That you, Richard, in whose knowledge and judgment I felt such confidence, and to whom for so many years I blindly entrusted a matter of such delicate importance as the handling of the help, should have been so——"

"Mr. Richardson!" broke in Dick, gazing in hurt bewilderment from the president to the general manager, and from the general manager back to the president, "You are laboring, sir, under a wretched mis——"

But the attempt to stem the tide of the old man's torrential wrath was futile, for he plunged wildly on:

"No, no! Nothing you could say would justify such stupidity, Richard. Mr. Markley has endeavored to explain matters; but the situation speaks unanswerably for itself, and is an indictment of utter incompetence—it is irretrievably disgraceful. All I ask of you is to go. I'm sorry I can't reconcile it to my sense of duty to permit you to resign. You are dismissed—discharged!"

"But, sir—Mr. Richardson—why——"

"Mr. Markley has just gone over the entire situation with me; and I regret that he didn't carry out his intention of relieving you from the service during my absence. That would have saved me this more than painful duty. Go!"

It seemed worse than useless to attempt to vindicate himself until the president's hysterical frenzy had subsided. Undoubtedly, the malign influence of the general manager had been deliberately exercised to stir the effervescent temperament of the president to an ebullient fury of mingled emotions—shocked astonishment, betrayed confidence, humiliated pride, impulsive resentment and executive responsibility. In fact, Dick observed, as he turned toward the door, that the leer on Markley's face had broadened to a malevolent grin.

"Of course, Mr. Richardson," murmured the abased superintendent, chokingly, "I shall make it a point to see you again when—when conditions afford you better opportunity for an audience."

But, passing an open window in his stormy perambulations, the old man's ear caught the sound of turbulence, and the shouts of the excited men, in the street below.

His face hardened instantly; and, turning upon the speaker, he cried pitilessly: "It is utterly useless, Richard; I am irreparably disappointed in you."

Dick passed through the door and closed it after him. Was it possible that greed of gain could inspire a man to such bold, foolish, mad machinations as this diabolical duplicity of Markley's?

Bold? Surely, the entire procedure was that. Foolish and mad? Perhaps not; for, after all, the matter became, in the last analysis, a sheer question of veracity between the general manager and himself. Reasoning thus, Dick walked out upon the great floor and gazed again upon the long rows of silent looms.

Was this really to be the end of it all—the end of his ten years of ceaseless industry and ambitious service—the end of his toilsome journey from floor-boy to loom worker, to foreman, to superintendent? the end of the uncountable, long, weary nights spent in patient study and limitless reading? The end of—of that enchanting dream of bliss—that one great, deep, all-absorbing hope and joy of his life?

No, no! Not that! Good God, no! It must not—could not be! His hand gripped a beam of one of the loom-frames, and his head dropped upon his arm.

He could see her face again—upturned, pure, true, and stanch; stanch as the stars that glittered above. And the soft moonbeams, illuminating the sweet countenance, revealed the unmistakable love-light shining in those eyes that windowed a soul in which, as he had insisted, lurked mystic, unspeakable wonders. And one of those wonders was that by the tie of love—the bond of mated souls—she had given herself to him, was his, absolutely and irrevocably.

He might be unjustly treated, might be branded as stupid and incompetent, might be ignominously deprived of his position and dismissed in disgrace and defeat; but nothing, nothing on earth, could rob him of the jewel he treasured above and beyond all things else. Then what mattered all other things? Ay, her soul was truer to his than those everlasting planets to their central suns; and she would not desert or fail him in this abyss of undeserved abasement and agony. Well, then, he would fight this battle to a finish. If he lost, he would take a fresh grip, begin all over, fight a new battle, and—win again! He and she—would win—they were invincible!

The bent, dejected form straightened and stiffened; his head reared itself erect upon his shoulders. Hope and confidence crept back to his heart; faith and courage stole again into his misty, pain-stricken eyes.

But, hark! What sound was that? The hum of those voices in the street had grown into an ominous roar, above which rose shouts and curses of stronger-lunged individuals.

"Something has gone wrong down there with the men!" he thought anxiously.

Another cry reached his ear. It was the hoarse bellow of a workman whose voice was familiar known to him; and there was that in the tone of it which froze his blood, yet galvanized him into instant activity.

"Great heavens!" he muttered. "Those wretched devils mustn't add crime to their troubles!"

In a moment he had cleared the stairway, flung open the front door at the bottom, and sprung out upon the low, stone steps that rose from the sidewalk. On the pavement below, the men were surging in a shouting, swearing mass around a hatless, coatless, struggling human figure that was being tossed about in the center of the turmoil like a chip caught in the swirl of a maelstrom. It was the general manager!

In all probability, Markley's anger and contempt had led him to the door to rebuke the men, and he had fallen into their clutches at the moment their passions were rampant. Brawny arms were striving to reach him; muscular hands were clutching at his bare head; heavy fists were wildly beating the air in the vicinity of his face; while behind and above him, a two-foot section of iron pipe was being flourished with sickening menace.

With a cry that rose even above the uproar and shouts, Dick leaped from the steps into the crazed throng.

"You infernal idiots!" he shrieked into their ears, as he plunged through their ranks, driving his elbows crushingly into unprotected ribs, beating heads with an iron fist, and gripping throats with a wrench that made the jaws gape wide. "You blind blockheads! Are you decent workingmen or criminals?"

They heard and they saw. They heard those bitter denunciations and contemptuous epithets rippling from lips which they well knew to be slow to condemnation and totally strange to passionate rebuke. They heard the word "criminal;" and, as its sinister sound smote their ears, they came to their senses.

They saw their superintendent and friend, Dick Benton, with livid face and blazing eyes, beating them mercilessly down, like dogs—because he was their friend and wouldn't let them be dogs. They not only heard and saw; but understood.

But that iron pipe—which still remained aloft, waving in the heart of the fray, and now directly over Markley's head! Dick felt that he must reach it before it fell, propelled by the hand that held it—the hand of Jim Blake, gone

mad with a fury that rendered him oblivious to the nature of his act, and blind to the consequences to himself, his wife and his little ones.

With one supreme drive, Dick catapulted himself through the living barrier, and sent his fist crashing with all his power into Jim's face. Without a moan, Blake sank to the ground. But the pipe had already begun its vicious descent, and Dick's plunge brought him fairly within range. His own skull received the blow, and he would have stretched his length across the body of the man he had felled had he not been deftly caught in a pair of herculean arms.

Big Jerry—a gigantic workman, slow to wrath and speech, a man with a temperament of ice and the tongue of a sphinx—had been standing silently on the outskirts of the crowd, a mere spectator of the excitement of his fellows, when Dick emerged from the building. But, as Jerry's watchful eye beheld the young superintendent launch himself recklessly into the murderous turbulence, he promptly hurled his own immense bulk into the melee from the opposite side; and, tossing the men to right and left of him like toy puppets, he waded through the throng—partly in a spirit of cooperation, but principally in an endeavor to protect from harm the object of their rough affection.

The two met in the center of the brawl—Jerry a fraction of a second too late; and, as he stood towering above his comrades with the superintendent's limp form clasped in his arms, he glowered down upon his mates with a mixture of scorn, pity and sorrow. But, in such an unusual situation, he was even less capable than normally of moving his unpracticed tongue to speech.

Markley, unhurt—barring a few insignificant scratches—but fuming like a ruffled peacock, shook his soft fists wildly at Jerry and spluttered up at him venomously.

"Braddock, you villain, put that man down here on the pavement immediately, and I'll go into the office and telephone for an ambulance. Do you know that you could be placed on trial for manslaughter?"

A threatening murmur arose from the breathless crowd; but died away instantly as big Jerry laboriously prepared to reply. Lightly, he swung the form of the unconscious superintendent across his left arm. The blood, which had streamed from the wounded head, dripped slowly from Jerry's right hand, as he deliberately extended the latter toward the general manager and pointed a great index finger accusingly into Markley's very face.

The big workman's cold, passionless gray eyes fixed themselves upon his superior's countenance in a stern, searching stare before which the other's restless, shifty orbs drooped and fell. Then, Big Jerry Braddock—to the amazement, admiration and everlasting gratitude of his silent and thoroughly horrified comrades—found grace to speak.

"Little fat cur!" he growled, with scathing contempt and cutting irony. "Mr. Benton is in the hands of his friends. As for villains, we have your measure, and will settle with you later."

It was a long speech for the taciturn Jerry, and an effective one. Behind those contemptuous words and the grim gaze lurked a strange significance which must have forcibly impressed Markley; for, witnout further remark, he veritably slunk up the steps and disappeared through the doorway.

A couple of the men had dragged the recovering Jim Blake to his feet, blinking and bewildered; and old Bill Mason had sidled up to Jerry and whispered something in his ear. Jerry turned to the crowd.

"Boys," he shouted, "you've come mighty close to makin' a grand mess of everything. You better leave it all, now, to Old Bill and me, and the rest of you make yourselves scarce as quick as you kin. Take that chump Blake and his nut-cracker along with you, and get him out of sight before Markley sends the 'Old Man' himself flyin' downstairs."

In another moment, Jerry had Dick's head under the hydrant in the mill-yard. The cold water instantly restored his senses, and he was able, assisted by his two employes, to walk out to the street and with them board a passing car.

So rapidly had the crowd of men acted upon Jerry's palpably sound advice, that the mill pavement was already quite deserted; but, just as the car rounded an adjacent corner, the watchful eyes of Jerry and Bill, straining back in anxious gaze, beheld President Richardson dash out upon the mill steps and glance wildly up and down the street. Before they had ridden another block, Dick turned helplessly to his companions, and murmured faintly:

"Say, boys, I wish one of you'd leave the car and telephone to Dr. Adams, my physician. Tell him what has happened, won't you? and ask him to get to my house as quickly as possible? I—I'm afraid there's something pretty wrong with—with my head; I feel almighty queer."

The men exchanged covert glances of distress; and Old Bill, after obtaining the doctor's address from the wounded man, left Jerry the task of seeing the superintendent safely home.

By the time the house was reached, Dick was so weak and dizzy that Jerry had literally to carry him up to his room. Sitting unsteadily on the side of his bed, he turned to his mother, after Jerry had gone, and looking strangely into her anxious face, mumbled brokenly:

"Say, mother, the company reduced the men's pay, and they—they struck. The wages were already lower than they really should have been in all fairness; and, knowing there was no business justification for the cut, the men wouldn't stand for it. I—I can't help believing the whole thing was some sort of personal game on the part of Markley, the new general manager. I tried my best to dissuade him; but he seems deliberately bent on creating all sorts of trouble. He's pumped the president full of lies about me; and—and Richardson discharged me for incompetence in permitting the strike to occur. Yes, he did worse, mother—he practically kicked me out. Now, here I am; without a position, dismissed in disgrace, my record ruined, my prospects blasted, my personal relations with President Richardson destroyed; and—and—oh, my God, mother—I've asked Jess Richardson to be my wife!"

She caught his head on her arm as he fell back upon the bed. At the same moment, the doorbell gave a crisp, authoritative ring. The doctor's automobile had rumbled up to the curb, and Old Bill Mason alighted from it just as Jerry came down the front door steps.

Doctor Adams entered the house while the two workmen—talking in low, earnest tones—marched off with their heads together and their gait and manner indicating, as expressively as such things may, a most important objectiveness.

"How did you ever guess it?"

"I think it essential to your son's welfare, Mrs. Benton," said the doctor, seriously, after a critical examination of the patient, "that we place him where he can receive the constant technical attention which his peculiar condition will require. With your permission, I'll make immediate arrangements to have him removed without delay to Rutledge Haven."

Her hands clutched desperately at her breast, and she gazed at him aghast as she exclaimed:

"Oh, doctor, isn't that a—an insane asylum?"

He laid his hand kindly upon her shoulder.

"No, no; not—er—essentially. It's simply a private institution for the special treatment and care of just such abnormal conditions as I fear this injury may develop."

"Now, see here, Mrs. Benton!" he went on, as she seemed about to collapse. "I've been your physician for many years, and you've always trusted me implicitly—happily not in vain. Please do so in this case. Believe me, I wouldn't propose this step were it not the very best thing for your boy's welfare."

She sank into a chair, murmuring resignedly: "I do trust you unreservedly, Dr. Adams. Make whatever arrangements you deem wisest."

It must have been just about the time the doctor was leaving the Benton home that Old Bill and Big Jerry—after many covert adjustments of their soiled collars, sly tugs at their frayed sleeves, and careful pats of the roughness of their worn garments—solemnly ascended the steps of the Richardson residence.

Old Bill, as a veteran employe, had for so many years been the trusted messenger between the president's office and home, that he had a fair acquaintance with the maid who opened the door, hence, it seemed to her quite a matter of course when he requested an audience with "Miss Jessie."

They were ushered into the latter's sittingroom, where she received them with her customary friendly nod and cheery smile.

"A message from father, Bill?" she inquired.

"N—o, Miss Jessie," replied the old man, awkwardly, while Jerry crunched the fingers of each of his hands alternately in the grip of the other.

She looked up, and for the first time observed their somber faces.

"Bill—Jerry! What is it? Why are you both here in the midst of working hours? Has something happened?"

"The men's all out on strike, Miss Jessie," blurted Jerry, the crackling of his finger-joints sounding between the rumblings of his deep voice.

"On strike!" she repeated, incredulously, rising slowly to her feet. "Do you mean to tell me it's possible they've struck on—on—Mr. Benton?"

Imperceptibly, Bill's foot pressed gently on Jerry's toes as the old man monopolized the reply:

"Not on Mr. Benton, Miss Jessie. They'd stand for anything from him—even the cut in pay, I believe. But it's about—about him, and—and other things that we want to have a few words with you."

She pulled a couple of chairs close to her own; and, reseating herself, said with a quiet authority that somehow reminded both visitors of the president himself: "Sit down here and talk. I want to know all about this."

Egged on and assisted by each other, the untutored men—in uncouth fashion, yet with innate tact—poured their difficult story into her attentive ears.

Soon after Markley had become general manager of the company, several new hands were taken on. In a short time, the old employes began to have vague suspicions of the strangers. One day, a small group of the regulars overheard one of the newcomers babbling in his cups of his own importance as the confidant of one, Mike Donovan, "Mr. Markley's right-hand man."

Naturally, the old hands were much interested; and, by skilful maneuvering, elicited the fact that this tipsy babbler, Matson, and another man, Farwell by name, were both deputies of said Donovan, who as a trusted hireling, had for many years followed the shifting fortunes of Markley. All three were paid spies whose business it was to keep the general manager informed of the sayings and doings of the men. The duties of these minions, however, did not cease there; for it was also incumbent upon them to mold the thoughts and views of the employes according to specific instructions from the general manager. When that proved impossible, it devolved upon them to stir up frictions, strifes, and dissensions among the workers in order to divide their attention and prevent organized consolidation or any concerted resistance to the innovations contemplated by the unscrupulous Markley.

Forewarned being forearmed, this knowledge enabled the men quietly to avoid falling into the net spread to receive them.

Upon the evening of the day when the notice of reduction was given, a mass meeting of the employes was held to consider the situation. Possessed of information calculated to excite and anger much better disciplined temperaments than the workmen could boast, the meeting was a stormy affair. The momentous secret burst from raging breasts, and wild threats were openly made against the spies, who, previously unaware that they had been discovered, were all present. Matson and Farwell, thoroughly frightened by the grim menace of the situation, and concerned solely for their own safety, broke down completely and confessed all they knew. Donovan, as might have been expected, was bolder and more obstinate.

"But," explained Jerry, with ominous significance, raising one of his great arms and clenching a mighty fist, "when we give him the third degree, he squealed like a stuck pig, Miss Jessie, and turned his insides out; told everything he knowed, and he knowed a d—a deal of a lot more'n we'd ever suspicioned."

"Yes," continued Old Bill, taking up the tale with a warning look at his less diplomatic colleague, "Donovan has trained with his boss for ten years, done all his dirty work, and knows him better'n Markley himself thinks. He blabbed everything and put us right on to the manager's whole game. Backed by a distant relation who happens to be one of our heaviest stockholders, Markley comes to the company as a great organizer, he does. He'll boost the business, cut down the expenses and swell the profits, he will. So he starts his boost by reducin' the men's pay. But first, he goes to his broker and gets short of the market on the company's stock, because he knows the men'll strike—his spies are there to egg 'em on and make certain, if there's any doubt. The strike'll send the stock crashing down; and Mr. Markley, being short, will make a barrel of money on the fall.

"But, honin' Mr. Benton can be fooled into believin' the men won't walk out—or, failin' that, fooled into thinkin' the increased profits 'll boost the stock—Markley he tries to fill Mr. Benton full of wind so as the superintendent'll buy up the stuff and be ruined in the crash. Well, then all the blame for the bad judgment and injustice that caused the strike is to be laid on Mr. Benton's shoulders, so the company'll have to bounce him.

"You see, with the spies doin' good work, the strike can be made to last so long that maybe the directors'll even have to get rid of Mr. Richardson himself because he can't manage the situation. Of course, Mr. Markley, bein' next, would just naturally fall into the place. Then the spies, by playin' on the men's minds the other way, could bring the strike to a close, and Mr. Markley would be the great I-am. You know, the men get tired of such fights—especially when their bread and butter gives out; and are glad to have an end of trouble. But, even at the worst, Mr. Markley could always settle the difficulty by puttin' the men back to their old pay, and playin' the high and mighty over Mr. Benton's injustice and dumbness in makin' the reduction and causin' all the wrangle. It was Mr. Benton posted the notices, and they didn't show that Markley's orders was behind 'em; but that didn't fool us for a minute.

"Now, don't forget that just before stoppin' the strike, Mr. Markley would naturally see his broker again and get long of that stock, so as to be in on the move when it went up again after the settlement. You see, Miss Jessie, what a pretty game the whole thing was. Why, it would make a wreck of Mr. Benton—ruin his pocketbook as well as his reputation and future; it would put your own father on the shelf, and make Mr. Markley president of the company; it would make the new president a very rich man at the same time—seein' as how he catched the mark both goin' and comin'. But with the help o' God and Jerry's big claws, we squeezed the whole truth out of Mike Donovan's throat just in time. Then, we forced both him and his dirty scullions to write it all out on paper and put their names to it. After that, we told 'em we'd brain 'em if they tipped Markley off or that we were wise. So, when the trouble got fairly under way, we had a line on the whole game, knowed every move, and knowed just where to lay the blame. Seems as if Markley's one of them that must rule or ruin."

The girl's face was pallid, her eyes flashing, her hands desperately gripping the arm of her chair.

"Of course," added Jerry, anxious that no aspect should be overlooked or misunderstood, "them scullions of Markley's held their tongues because they was atween the devil and the deep sea. They was afraid of us; but they might have risked that an' tipped their boss, only

(Continued on page fifteen.)

BALD HEADS

BY WALTER A. SINCLAIR

BALD heads were invented to allow theater managers to put in Rows A and B in their seating plans. This is the bald statement of facts, or the statement of bald facts, whichever you choose. Burlesque shows and musical comedies, like centipedes, are supposed to travel on their legs, but what would they be without their bald heads? Echo, doing its much-advertised specialty, answers, "What?"

From antiquity to the present, from Elisha, the prophet to Jack Rose the profit taker, bald heads have figured conspicuously in the world's history. In spite of our great prosperity, the American eagle has always been bald, and while he can swoop down to capture lambs, squirrels, and chickens, he never caught a hare. Doubtless the sensitiveness, which afflicts the bald causes the eagle to sit alone on some lofty mountain crag, fearlessly looking the sun square in the eye, and wondering if there really is any sure hair restorer. Nobody knows whether the eagle is bald from too much thinking, or whether he wore a tight-fitting hat when young.

His inability as a game catcher recalls the old cooking proverb, "First catch your hair." Usually the bald head neglects to attempt this until it is going—or gone. The tantalizing part of it is that many a bald head can find hair in his soup, but not a sprig of it on his cranium.

Like poets, some men are born bald, others achieve baldness, while still others have baldness thrust upon them. The baby, coming into this vale of colic and safety-pins, usually is bald. Amateur parents frequently cannot tell which side is Baby's face and which is the back of his head, until he opens his mouth to declaim on the high cost of living and the scarcity of milk. Then they have "inside information."

Some babies are born with hair on their terra-cotta-colored cupolas, but they quickly outgrow it. That is, some of them quickly shed it within a few months, remaining pink and bald until they have raised their first year's crop. Others take forty years, finally growing so tall they grow right up through their hair. After that they seldom are troubled by hair, and have to tie a string around their brows to mark off where to stop when washing their faces.

There is an age when the male biped wishes he were bald. That is in luxuriant youth, when the matter of brushing his hair at least once a week is a hardship imposed on him by stern parents. As the years flit by the man again encounters this hardship, but this time he finds that it takes much care and work to make his sparse locks, which grow about his ears and could be worn as side trellises, brush over his shining pate, which rises like a full moon balancing coyly on the back of his neck. Men who cultivate this style of hair can brush same with a towel, and they do frequently.

The custom of carefully encouraging the long side winders at the temples and plastering them over the waste places of the great American Desert is nothing new, although each man who attempts the subterfuge thinks he is the discoverer of the deceit, and each one believes he is deceiving the rest of the world. We find Martial, who was some satirist in ancient Rome, hair-owing the feelings of Marinus, his pet target, who was bald and also bawled out.

What Martial said about Marinus' attempt to hide his shining minaret under a bushel of side hair was a shame. Apparently the satirist had a Martial array of hair, for he says to another victim: "Why do I not kiss you, Philaenius? You are bald." Now, if every chorus girl was as fussy as that, there would be fewer of the dear creatures owning their private automobiles.

Rome must have been a great market for hair restorers, although it was too early—instead of "too late"—for Hopecide. "Caesar, because he was bald, covered that defect with laurels." There is where Caesar had it on modern mortals. If a resident of this free land should wander outdoors covering the nakedness of his coco with laurels, he would be led gently to a quiet place where the rooms were padded.

Caesar did not get away with it forever, at that, for after wearing laurels on returning from many a close shave with the hairy Gauls and Vandals, he was all cut up in the Senate barber shop. Even one of his oldest friends cut him dead.

Baldness was a subject for unpleasant levity at an even earlier date. We read of the Prophet Elisha, who was kidded about his polished dome of thought as he was strolling up a mountain near Beth-el.

Small children, with no pity for the woes of a man who found baldness a vocational disease in the prophet business, shouted, "Go up, thou bald head! Go up, thou bald head!" Repeat ad lib. A bald gibe to fling at any man, and especially at a prophet not given to hair-splitting when dealing out retribution.

Possibly Elisha had nothing to do with it, but the record is that "There came forth two she-bears out of the wood and tare up forty and two children of them." Oh, children, is this not a lesson for us to think twice before making personal remarks about bald heads?

Since that time, and by curious coincidence, we note that bald-headed men can always be found at cabaret shows where she "grizzly bear" dancers abound, and that the same denuded-domed men join in the weird song "It's a bear! it's a bear!" as though warning the irreverent. Any one wishing to shout "Bald head!" at a fellow man had best first take a correspondence school course in bear taming.

At a later period in history, a young man who had every expectation of becoming king, at a time when kinging was some business, met a hasty, not to say fatal death because he was not a bald head. I refer to the late Absalom.

A bald man is unromantic looking.

Owing to his luxuriant locks of hair, he was caught in the branches of a tree while making his hurried getaway from his loving Papa's soldiers. His silky locks proved time locks which would not release until the next morning. And as the mule on which Ab was joy-riding had business elsewhere, the stupid animal continued on his way, leaving David's rebel son curling his tresses on the branches and longing for a barber. If Absalom had been bald, the trees would have brushed the flies off his roof garden, and history might have been different. Anyway, David would have been saved a perfectly good robe which he rent with considerable dramatic fervor on getting the news. Although history does not record it, there is every reason to believe that that mule was a piebald.

According to the Century Dictionary "bald" is "of uncertain origin," although many think it is of germ origin. As billiards is not so antique a game, we cannot suppose the word is derived from "a billiard-balled," although it looks the part. Anyway, that has the origin to do with it? The result is what shows up so luminously, and the lexicographers cannot help cover that desolate space by their researches, not even if they go back to the ancient English, Latin, or Greek roots of "hair."

Bald men were on the job in all ages. Possibly they were remembered for their baldness, but their glowing beans shine out in the dark ages of history as those of clever men. In spite of his strength-giving hair, Samson showed bone-head judgment and got into trouble no bald head would have encountered. Running rapidly down the corridors of time and bumping into the statuary, we note in addition to Elisha and Caesar, such well-known bald heads as Ben Franklin, Napoleon, and John D. Among the famous monarchs, Charles I. and Louis XVI. lost their hair very suddenly, at the same time losing their complete heads. How many other kings were shy on the bean floss will never be known, owing to the custom of kings wearing their crowns while in public, preventing the historians and other court jesters from getting a line on them. They never experienced the woes of the bald man, who, while standing politely, hat in hand, was commanded hysterically to "Put on your hat, man, you look naked!"

How many romances must have been shattered by baldness. "A hair divides the false and true," and how often has a lack of hair divided two loving hearts! A woman must be indeed of noble stuff—or blind—to be able to love a man whose bald head makes her want to snicker when he is on his knees at her feet dealing out romantic guff with appropriate gestures.

What woman lives and breathes but just loves to run her fingers carelessly through her fiance's curly locks? Or his bank account? That's where the bald-headed man scores. Thus do we see the association in romance of the two Dans—Cupid and Druff.

Just a little bit off the top may be sad enough for men, but contemplate the vice versa sex. Somebody said—both Pope and Dryden used the line and you know how carelessly those old boys borrowed each other's best stuff—that "Beauty draws us with a single hair." Imagine any woman with a single hair drawing any man. Moreover, try to picture a beauty with only a single hair. Never! Not while wig makers thrive. Oh, rats! Let's switch the subject. An easy transformation.

Man's seven ages of baldness, to follow W. Shakespeare's model, are: The puling infant bald at birth, the schoolboy with his shining or reluctant morning feet going to be bawled out by Dear Teacher; the callow high-balled youth, the soldier on the field of battle with many hair-breadth—and length—escapes, the age when the barber warns "Going," and again "Going" and finally "Bald!"

Bald, barefacedly, all the way to the back of the neck, and fit subject for unseemly jest. Having to wear a skull cap while other men sit uncovered at the play, the dining table or in the train, capped for fear a vagrant draft will seek out the impersonation of a door-knob. Bald and having to wear a woman's bathing cap while swimming, because the sun might burn the bean and cause it to peel off in fuzzy rolls of epidermis.

And yet, bald men make the most acceptable chefs, for obvious reasons—too obvious to the possessor who fears an ostrich may make a mistake and try to hatch him. Bald heads furnish excellent entertainment and exercise to billions of flies who cannot live in winter to enjoy the delights of ice skating.

There are compensations. A bald-headed man does not have to waste hours fussing to make his hair part or lie just so. Nor does he have to spend money having his thatch trimmed by a talkative barber who insists the victim needs a shampoo and a singeing added. The b. h. man never looks rumpled, nor does he pull out his hair in distraction.

He can solace himself with the reflection that a great conqueror was bald, so is the richest man, and so was one of the funniest, Bill Nye. If he is incapable of reflections so soothing, let him take olive oil and shine up his poll, and it will reflect for him.

As a long-delayed tribute to this deserving institution, a musical show this year has a song number in which the actress who sings it steps out into the audience and resoundingly kisses the bald-headed men, smack on their shining pates. 'Tis the b. h. man's crowning delight.

What if the waitress to whom the bald-headed man complained, "My cocoa is cold," pertly replied, "Why don't you put on your hat?" The hairy men of Borneo never could have invented the aeroplane like the Wright brothers, nor could William Jennings Bryan unite the Democratic party till his bald head pushed his luxuriant hair away back behind his ears. So all together, with that good old song:

"Should bald acquaintance be forgot
In the days of bald lang syne?"

* * *

Covering his bean.

FATE'S TRAIL.

Tommy Delaney, strolling down the street unconcernedly as befits a gentleman of 11, saw a window open in the Rapple house. At the same psychological instant he saw an enticing round stone.

Possibly he held some grudge against Edgar Rapple, or maybe it was just the lurking savage breaking through the crust. At any rate in the brief space of time it takes a round pebble to hurtle through the air the stone whizzed in at the open window and landed precisely in the middle of a cut glass flower bowl on a little table. The bowl spitefully snapped and then glittered in pieces upon the floor. Tommy faded away, not knowing of the havoc fear beginning to prick through his tanned leather conscience.

He resolved to bury the knowledge of what he had just done among several other social crimes. He really was annoyed at himself, for stone throwing had seized him several years earlier, and then had passed with measles and whooping cough, and he could not understand how he came to have a relapse.

Mrs. Rapple, entering her parlor half an hour later, saw the disaster and the open window and rushed to it. Outside she beheld her son Edgar in the incriminating act of bending over, with his fingers about to clutch something on the ground.

"Ed—gar-r-r-r Rapple!" his mother cried. "Come into the house this minute and see what you've done!"

"I didn't!" Edgar protested loudly. "I don't know nothin'——"

"Fibbing on top of it!" his mother interrupted him, excitedly. "Why, I saw you with my own eyes, picking up another stone, Edgar Rapple, and if that isn't enough I'd like to know what is!"

When Edgar had been neatly trimmed off with a slipper he was put into the spare room clothes closet that his plight might sink in. Edgar was considerably dazed as well as indignant. He kicked the door.

"Edgar Rapple!" his mother said sternly. "I've had enough from you today! That bowl cost fifteen dollars, I'd have you know! Not another sound out of you—and untruthful into the bargain!"

Edgar breathed and muttered. Being shut in a closet and on a false charge at that, is decidedly tiresome if one is fond of variety.

"Oh, pickles!" Edgar snuffled at last. Then, reaching up in the dark he pulled something off the wall, snuggled into the heap it made on the floor and disgustedly went to sleep.

Two hours later Miss Genevieve Rapple opened the closet door. Genevieve was going to a dance that evening with Howard Delaney, the grown-up brother of Tommy, the criminal, and she was glad that her new pink chiffon and lace party frock had turned out such a success. She relied on that frock to hypnotize Howard to the point where he would say something final, thus placing their affair upon a satisfactorily definite basis. Next June, she had decided, would be a perfectly lovely time for the wedding.

Peering into the closet's depths, Genevieve saw a blank wall where that morning she had carefully hung her new gown. On the floor, however, lay a ball of something human, asleep. Edgar did not really seem human to his sister when she grasped the hideous fact that all the stringy pink stuff in which he was swathed and the soiled white stuff through which he had thrust one muddy shoe and likewise the crumpled pink stuff bunched beneath him were what was left of her satin and chiffon and lace. Grabbing her carefully coiffed head with both hands, Genevieve went into hysterics of the most violent sort.

"You'll just have to wear your old blue, dear," said her sympathetic mother, when the storm had somewhat abated.

"I can't imagine what has got into Edgar——"

"I'll die before I'll wear that blue thing!" Genevieve moaned.

Genevieve went to the party clad in the blue. Now, any woman knows how the wearing of an old hated dress, when she has counted jubilantly on appearing in a new one, and a perfect dream at that, can affect one's disposition, even turning one against one's very best beloved. So in place of the sweet and clinging young person who had occupied Howard Delaney's thoughts of late, to the exclusion of nearly everything else, that young man found himself escorting a feminine prickly pear.

Genevieve grew worse and worse with the realization of what she was doing, so her conduct became an unquenchable orgy of bad temper with trimmings of hysteria. She and Howard began to quarrel during the third waltz, and they went home finally to the tune of a violent disagreement, wherein each assured the other that he or she never wanted to lay eyes on her or him again.

Genevieve cried herself to sleep that night over the disastrous wreck of her life. Howard Delaney, having stormed home, kicked one pump down the hall and the other into a chandelier, wrenched off his collar and tore out the buttonhole, went to bed, got up in ten minutes and smoked gloomily till morning.

Then, tumbling into the hall in the gray dawn, he stepped barefooted on a collection of jackstones—which are as pleasant to step on as porcupine quills.

The jackstones spanned the floodgates. Striding into Tommy's room, Howard yanked his small brother out of bed.

"If nobody—spank—else in this—spank, spank—family will—spank—teach you—that—other—people—have a few—spank, spank—rights in—spank—this world—spank—I will. Spank, spank, spank!" he explained to Tommy.

"Gee!" Tommy said thankfully to himself after he had quit his vocal protests and was left alone. "Ain't I glad nobody's caught on to that stone I threw? I'd get a-plenty for that!"

He little thought that fate, by its own processes, had run him down.

* * *

When a young man sits ten feet away from a girl and calmly informs her that she is his first and only love she can bank on his veracity.

The Master Craft

By Paul Crissey

FOR something like three weeks the light in the builder's private office burned steadily, night and day, and the yellow gleam of its reflection streamed out over the half-broken waters of the bay like some weird finger pointing to new achievements. Inside the long, low structure only one lantern glared through the long hours of the night when the men were absent and the watchman went his rounds with careful, silent footsteps.

The big men in the Navy Department at Washington were alive with curiosity—and the queer shell of steel, lying the length of the structure, was mute to their questioning. Before a pile of blue prints, with his hand clutched almost wildly in his hair, sat Hugh Allison. His brow contracted into deep furrows as he scratched nervously at the drawings before him with his pencil. It was lonely here, and the quiet, wordless watchman in the building behind him was but poor company. Every five or ten minutes he poked his head in at the door, grunted unpleasantly, and withdrew again to the darkness beyond.

Hour after hour and day after day had worn the young man to a mere shred of his former self, and the work, while the huge submarine was under construction, had proved too great a strain for nerves well regulated in the past. He laid down his pencil, finally, and stared with blank eyes out of the window and across the bay to where, miles away, the red-and-white beams from the revolving light on Crown Point alternated in their work. There in the sea lay his future. It was but a try for something already developed into a definite idea that had led him to build the great submarine for the Government. If the trial trip proved a success, he might well afford to sleep for a day or two, or even a week, if he felt like it. If it didn't succeed—that spelled but one thing, failure, complete and sure. His dreams would be shattered. His best principles would be buried beneath the publicity of a costly, useless expenditure, and his reputation, however slight would be totally ruined for years.

Something like six months before, he had come forward to a certain big man in the Navy Department with his plans for a submarine, and after days of haggling, or theorizing, and of expounding, he had obtained the contract for the largest submarine boat in the world, to be constructed after his own idea and under his personal supervision. And now, with the final checking up of the accessories before him, the boat lay ready to be launched—and he was tired—and his head slowly sank upon the table before him.

The sharp jangle of the telephone bell alongside of him swept off for the moment the passion for sleep, and he raised the receiver to his ear. It was Donaldson, the chief of construction, talking, and the import of his words had a startling effect on the young man at the table.

"I'm sending five men over to cover the job," came the voice, faintly, over the wire. "If you need more, get in touch with me at once. That gang will do anything in their power to put a stop to our plans."

"Just my idea exactly," answered the young man in the office. "We can't afford to fizzle with that launching tomorrow if it takes twenty Secret Service men."

"You can have them—if you think you need them," Donaldson answered, and Allison shook his head slightly.

"Guess not," but even as he spoke he regretted it.

Then came the next question to his ears: "Have you got a gun with you?"

Allison laughed. "No, of course not—it won't came to that."

"Hum—maybe not, but better be on the safe side and stick one in your pocket. Those men will get over there about daylight. They are thoroughly reliable, and you can trust them until the crack of doom. Well, good luck and so long."

The telephone clicked and Allison gravely hung up the receiver with a sigh. The dark little chap of the day before had been easy to spot, and while nothing definite was known as to his intention, the construction chief had put a couple of his watchdogs on his trail and learned enough to warrant action on suspicion.

"Too deep for me," muttered Allison, as he turned wearily to his work. "They may be emissaries from some other country. Well, if they are, I can't help it. I'll build a boat, but I can't carry a torch in any international complications. If they want to prevent that launching tomorrow they'll have to go some." He gritted his teeth and set to his work again with renewed vigor. Once or twice during the remainder of the night a little thrill of misapprehension chilled his form, and he shuddered slightly as if a cold breath of air had struck him; and when finally the cold gray of the early morning pervaded the little office, he leaned back with a sigh and watched the boat from the mainland push its way through the ice-coated waters of the bay.

"I don't think there's the slightest danger in the world that any one will interfere," he told the officer, when the men had finally landed and gained the shelter of the little office. "We will toss her in about ten o'clock and tie up to the pier out there. Then I'll make a few tests and we will sink. I want to get a few little things perfect before the committee comes out for the final test."

"Well, if you think there's no use worrying, we'll just scatter about and keep our eyes open. Maybe there'll be something doing and maybe there won't—you never can tell."

With these brief comments the officer stationed his men about the grounds, and Allison went back to his own little room—a partitioned space which for the last few months he had been pleased to call home. He changed his light clothes for a suit of heavy working togs, and then went back into the workshop where the results of his labor lay with its freshly applied gray paint—he had even mixed the paint and all because he wanted to have it through and through his own creation.

"You little beauty!" he muttered fondly, and then again, "You little beauty!" He crawled in through the narrow hatch of the tube-like boat and dextrously applied himself to a few finishing touches. He made sure with his voltmeter and ammpmeter that the batteries were fully charged; then he examined the coatings of all of the minute valves of the pumps. The air reservoirs came in for their share of the inspection, and so on, from one thing to another, he passed along until he was sure that the little craft of his own make was ready for her maiden trip.

"Would you feel very much happier?"

He crawled out, put an affectionate hand on the cold steel sides, rounded like a sea-fish, and then an idea struck him.

"The christening!" He had forgotten it. He must find some one to break the bottle over the bows when she took first water. Suddenly he bethought himself of the stenographer. It was time that she had arrived from the mainland for her daily duties—she would do. He didn't care particularly who it was—there was no one girl, and Allison shrugged his shoulders slightly as he thought of it. Vaguely he wished there might be some one girl who would care as much as he did—some one who would think as much of his boat as he did, and would have just a little interest in him. He blushed and smiled to himself and decided that the stenographer would do.

By this time he was in the office. He had failed to note that a spray-coated launch lay alongside of the pier. But he did see an unfamiliar form bending over his typewriter. It was not his regular stenographer. He coughed slightly and turned a deep scarlet as he did so. The form by the machine turned quickly and Allison gasped. It certainly was not his regular stenographer—nor did she resemble any member of his regular stenographer's family as far as features went. The two bright eyes were regarding him gravely, and a neatly gloved hand, very small, lay hesitatingly upon a pile of hastily discarded outer wraps. There was but one idea in Allison's mind—and that was wholly in a stenographical form.

"I suppose they sent you over in Miss Chase's place?" he said, slowly, for he surmised that some catastrophe had befallen his typist.

The girl looked quickly out of the window, drew a long breath hesitatingly when she saw the deserted launch, and smiled a rather disturbing smile.

"Yes, in a way," she answered, and Allison grinned noticeably. If she were just an ordinary stenographer he felt at ease. He also felt agreeably relieved to find that that was all she was, so he jumped ahead with his proposition.

"I guess," he said, slowly, "that you need not do much machine work today."

At the mention of work the girl quivered slightly, then braced up with a weak smile, and with a frightened, sidelong look at the intricacies of the typewriter.

"I'm so glad," she smiled back in evident relief. "My—er—fingers are rather stiff today, so—you see I came on such short notice that I didn't have much time to practice up." She displayed another rather dazzling smile, which caused vague pangs of doubt to cross Allison's mind. She certainly was not an ordinary girl, so he thought, and he had a good perception.

"I should explain," she continued, "that I have not been working much lately and—I am awfully out of tune—I'm afraid."

Allison smiled back this time, and the exchange of smiles brought a queer glow to his body. Here was a good companion, and he felt much as if he had been rescued from an isolation hospital. This new stenographer would be quite the one to break the bottle over the boat when the great steel hulk took its first plunge into the cold waters.

"I want you to do something for me will you?" he asked. The girl nodded a very fluffy head, and Allison continued. "We are going to launch my boat today—the submarine—and I've got to have some one christen her, you know." He laughed apologetically, but gained courage and continued again. "Do you mind? Will you break the bottle over her?" He waited for the girl's answer with what seemed to hrim at the time anextraordinary eagerness.

Strangely enough she answered promptly and swept him a very pretty courtesy.

"I am honored, Mr——?"

"Allison, Allison—Hugh Allison?" stammered the young man, "And yours?"

"I am just plain Miss Smith," she answered, gravely, and a slight shadow fell across her face. She was gazing out of the window, where, along some hastily prepared skids, the workmen were stretching a steel cable. "But I'll be only too glad to do it for you." For some reason or other her face assumed a sad expression, and young Allison felt that she had some secret sorrow. He coughed discreetly, and left the room to cover his confusion.

In the big shop behind the office there were several great, brawny men, some stripped to the waist in spite of the cold weather, toiling with huge chains and cables, and from aloft the rattle of tackle blocks and pulleys echoed through the building. The whole plant was one built for the sole purpose of turning out for the Government a fleet of modern submarines, and Hugh Allison's model was the first one to see the light of day. He felt strangely ill at ease, and the pressure of the last few weeks of final building had unnerved him for the test.

A big, sweating man stumbled by him with a coil of hawser rope cast over one shoulder, the frayed end dragging snakelike in the dust of the floor. Another, with arms full of crowbars and levers, more than a human load, stag-

gered by, and the designer gazed on the scene with a hazy stare, as if trying to realize that this was the final day and the day about which he had thought so much.

The sleek lines of his submarine looked good to the eye, and the well-balanced portions gave a sense of security to its appearance. The skids, greased and ready, stretched down to the water-edge like long, sinewy snakes, and Allison examined every foot of them before the final word for launching was given. Even then he called a halt in the work while he dashed into the office.

The girl, probably anticipating the moment, had gone out to the pier where she stood, with flapping skirts, in the high wind which piled the breakers up against the stone and scattered the flying foam in every direction. Allison caught a glimpse of her, smiled happily to himself, and wondered for a second at the strangeness of her coming into his life. He started to leave the office, carrying with him a bottle in a wicker covering. A quiet voice from the far corner of the room stopped him. It was Wilkerson, the Secret Service man.

"Wait a minute, Hugh," he said, slowly, and gathered up some crumpled papers by his side.

"What's the matter?" asked Allison, a vague alarm stirring his voice slightly.

"Oh, nothing much," coolly responded the detective. "Only this." He handed the papers to the young man, who set down the bottle slowly and reached for the extended papers.

"I am Miss Smith, I am Miss Smith, I am Miss Smith, Smith, Smith, Smith," he read, and a perplexed frown came to his forehead. "What the devil is this, Will?" he asked.

"Your stenographer—she is new, isn't she?" the Secret Service man answered briefly.

"Yes—this morning," was the answer. "Why?"

"Why did she come—do you know why your regular one didn't?"

"Why er—she was sick," answered Allison.

"Sick, eh?" growled the man. "Read this."

He handed over another slip of paper and Allison read it aloud.

"'Miss Chase:—It will not be necessary for you to come over this morning, because it is probable that the launching will consume most of the time during the day. Take a holiday, you deserve it—' and, by George, it is signed by me! I never wrote that letter—what do make of it?"

He was staring the Secret Service man in the face by this time, and a great rage had hold of him.

"Simply that those fellows who are trying to prevent the launching of your boat are taking this course to do it. They are clever, all right, but I don't see——"

"Well?"

"There's only one thing to do," responded the detective decisively, after a few moments of silence, "and that is to keep this girl with you every moment while we are launching the boat, and until we can safely get rid of her. We will watch that she doesn't give any signals, and we'll stick close to you while things are proceeding. If you go into the boat, take the girl with you—make her go wherever you do." He stopped and smiled ironically. "I guess you won't find that hard to do. Unless I'm mightily mistaken she's got you winging already."

"No," answered Allison, "it won't be hard to—er—stand her company."

She was very attractive, he thought, and he wondered who she really was, entangled in the web to destroy his works. It was very strange, very remarkable, how this tall girl with the deep, dark eyes had set him thinking. He had known girls, women, but he had never glanced twice at them. A man with his work—they tired of Allison, and for years it had been just that work, work, work. He took a deep breath and turned to the door.

"I'll keep my eye on her," he said, soberly. "I'll see that she doesn't get lost."

"See that you don't get lost yourself," muttered the chief. "Watch her every movement. I'm afraid she's got something rigged up. If she makes a signal—look out! There'll be something doing today or I miss my guess."

"Probably," answered Allison, shrugging his shoulders, "but I can hardly believe that she is mixed up——"

"Bah!" broke in the chief, cynically. "Of course, she's here to do you, or your boat. You watch out for yourself," he growled, "and take care of the girl."

"Humph!"

With this final ejaculation of disgust, Allison closed the office door behind him, slipped the bottle of wine under his coat, and made for the workshop where the men were loafing about. Eagerly he searched the faces about him, then turned to Madden, the construction boss.

"When did you take on that little dark fellow?" he asked, pointing to a short man whose shifty eyes roamed about as if in search of trouble.

"Took him on this morning—he wanted to work. I thought we'd probably need extra help."

Allison waved to the Secret Service chief. "Take him away," he ordered, marking out the little dark man. "He's the fellow who was fooling around here the other day."

"Now," said Allison, "let's get busy on these trip lines."

He gave a string of orders to the crowd of men before him and they began to get busy, and before the sun had climbed much higher the giant blocks and tackles had been fitted for the easing down of the submarine. The master craft lay glistening in the sun. A great hole had been torn in the side of the building, and through this aperture, the steel boat caught her first glimpse of the ice-flecked waters of the bay.

Allison looked about, and his eye caught the details of the work, one by one, and he checked them over mentally. It was a breeze-blown figure away out on the end of the pier which caught his eyes and held them there. She was a queer girl, Allison thought, as winsome as a June day and as freshly interesting as the crisp winds of November. What was her part in the launching of his submarine Allison did not know—except that she was to break the bottle at the christening.

"All's ready, sir," said Madden, stepping up. "We'll let her run any time you say the word."

"All right—get your men stationed," answered the designer, sharply. "One of you fellows run down the pier and bring that woman up here."

The man started on a dead run down the pier and soon appeared with Miss Smith, smiling, serene, and mysteriously shy as before. Allison was thinking rapidly. The launching of submarines meant so much to him that he had fairly groveled before fortune to plead for a smile in behalf of his boat. He should have the christening done correctly—a bad start and a bad end! He didn't want anything like that.

The man came up breathless from his run. The girl, too, was panting lightly, much as a forest thing after a chase. Her eyes were wide with excitement and they met Allison's coolly, steadily. There was no intrigue, no plotting, no cunning, in the look she turned on the boy designer, surely. But the evidence, the substantial evidence, was too overpowering to allow the suspicion to be dispelled. Allison took the bottle from his pocket and gravely handed it over to her. Then he motioned to one of the men.

"Put a ladder up alongside," he announced. Then, to the girl, "Please step up on the deck."

The girl looked inquiringly at first and then paled a trifle. The handkerchief in her hand trembled slightly and she bit her lip fretfully.

"On board?" she asked, then glanced hastily, almost furtively, it seemed, about the room.

"Before the launching?"

"Certainly," answered Allison, grimly. "Why not? You honored me by accepting my offer to have you at the christening. Now you couldn't back out."

"Maybe," said the girl, smiling halfheartedly, "maybe I don't care to back out."

"Maybe you don't," reiterated Allison. Then to himself, "But it doesn't make any difference, you'll go anyway."

Hesitatingly the girl mounted the ladder, the bottle firmly clutched in her hand, her face paled slightly, and her head rightly erect.

"You are very persuasive," she half whispered, "almost as persuasive as a wild animal trainer." She curled her lip, but Allison only bowed, mocked the look in her eyes, and in a jiffy sprang to her side on the little narrow deck. Sharply, loudly, he gave the word. A hundred hands put strength to the great cables; a dozen huge mallets knocked away the blockings; and with a shaky shiver, a passing jar, then a heavy trembling, the submarine slid down out of the building into the early spring sunlight and down the lazy slopes of the beach to the ice-crested waters of the bay.

It was not a very impressive launching, but the blood surged high in Allison's heart as he stood on the little, railed-in deck by the girl. Her eyes flashed from face to face in the crowd of workmen, and she raised the bottle high over her head.

"When she hits the water!" cried Allison. "Then—now! Let her have it!"

Down came the glass across the steel of the railing. It crashed, splintered and the wine ran hurriedly, happily, down over the curved plates of the little craft.

"In the name of the United States, I christen this boat the 'Firefly.'" The girl's voice rang clear above the cheers of the workmen. Allison staggered forward and pushed his face close to the girl's own.

"How did you know it was to be 'Firefly?'" he screamed. "I didn't tell you, did I?"

"No," answered the girl, slowly, "you didn't." She stopped and looked him square in the face. His eyes dropped. The boat was shooting out over the waters of the bay, and the workmen lining the pier were yelling to them.

"Go on," said Allison, softly; "you had more to say."

"Only this," continued the Miss Smith, "and it isn't very important. Would you —would you feel very much happier if you really knew who I am?"

"Would I?" reiterated Allison. "Well, of course I would—I have an idea already, not of who you are but of what you are. You see——"

But he never finished his sentence for Miss Smith had turned to a statue of ice, frozen, unflinching dignity.

"I might have known," she said, coldly, "that I should find few gentlemen on a trip and in a place like this. It would have been far better for me to have stayed with the Secretary——"

"What?" cried Allison, sharply alert to the fact that he had been doing the girl a great injustice. "What is your name—who are you?"

"I am——"

A great mist filled the air. Faintly, from far away, Allison heard the shouts and cries of men. For a second afterward there was a deathly stillness in the air, then a blinding flash of sea foam. The girl reeled suddenly. The air seemed full of water, and the unuttered words on the girl's lips were lost in the cry which escaped from Allison's throat in a ringing cry.

"Great God!" he shrieked. "The fiends have placed a mine and fired it."

It was all done in an instant. Even though he felt the finger of suspicion pointing accusingly at the girl as an accomplice maybe an instigator, of the plot to destroy the "Firefly," Allison admired her pluck. The air was filled with stinging splashes and particles of water, and so dense was it that the shore was lost from view.

Allison comprehended the situation immediately. To have the afterwave from the underwater explosion sweep over the "Firefly" meant certain destruction for the boat and sure death for its two passengers. He did not stop to speak. As fast as his mind worked his muscles followed swiftly, and when the situation unraveled in his mind, he grabbed the trembling girl and half swept her, half lifted and half dragged her, back along the slippery deck to the round hatch.

"Quick," he gasped, and he dropped her limply down into the shell. Rapidly he followed and just as his hand closed upon the lever which closed the water-tight hatch, the bow of the little boat shot suddenly skyward; then, like the roar of a hundred thunderstorms, the water from the explosion, like the column of a waterspout, crashed down upon the deck and the boat sank slowly on even keel.

Just a few pails of water had managed to slip in the hatch, but Allison had closed it in time. He looked at the register; it read five fathoms. The reservoirs were taking in water and soon they would be resting on the bottom of the bay, thirty fathoms below the surface.

He grinned. It was a good chance to try the little boat. Thinking so, he felt vaguely about the floor for the soaked form of his substitute stenographer. Finally he found her at the very foot of the ladder, picked her up, and put her gently on the divan amidships. She sat up, weakly, but smiled encouragingly at him.

"Hurt?" he asked cheerfully, as he switched on more lights.

"No," she answered, laughingly; "only my pride."

"Humph!" ejaculated Allison, ironically. "What were you saying about yourself before the cyclone struck us—I mean the explosion?"

"I was going to tell you my name," the girl answered, leaning back contentedly against a few pillows. "Help!" she cried faintly, without waiting for his answer. "What on earth was that?"

"What? That shuddering? Why, that's just what it is—the earth. We're on the bottom of the bay."

"On the bottom of the bay!" slowly repeated the girl, "with a man I never saw before, in a boat that never sailed before—and in a situation I never held until today. How soon can we get out of this?" she asked, finally, with a queer catch in her voice.

"I'm afraid——" began Allison, solemnly, "that we won't get out very soon—possibly—never!" He uttered each word like the click of a steel-trap, and the girl winced and cringed as the news struck her.

"You mean," she murmured, breathlessly, "that the machinery won't work—that you can't make this boat raise to the surface?" Her eyes burned into his own with all their intensity, but he gave her look for look and smiled grimly.

"Well," he drawled, deliberately, "not exactly that. The fact of the matter is, I don't really know whether the machinery will work or not. I haven't shown any disposition to try, have I? And I shan't try to make it work until you—until——" He stopped, for the girl had risen to her feet, her eyes blazing with rage and indignation.

"That will be a plenty!" she snapped hotly. "I admit I have been very indiscreet in taking—courting this adventure, but it's not the place to discuss that now. Please do not mince matters. If you want something, then tell me plainly—I hate indecision."

She stopped very much worked up, her eyes dilating swiftly and her bosom rising and falling with sharp regularity. Allison lowered his head, bit his lip, and regarded the wind-blown, storm-tossed girl before him. What an awful thing was impetuousity! If she would only let him finish his sentence!

"I was only going to say, madam, when you interrupted me, that I wasn't going to move this boat until I had found out who you are and what you are doing here on our island!"

For a moment the girl regarded him blandly, then slowly she sat down on the edge of the divan and buried her face in the palms of her hands. Allison watched the tips of her ears grow red underneath her brown hair. He watched her body sway rhythmically as the currents rocked the "Firefly." At last he could watch her no longer. Every nerve, every fiber in his body, was tingling.

"You see," he said coldly, "you see it's rather a serious offense to attempt to blow up a United States navy vessel. Also, it's rather difficult and unpleasant when a plotter gets caught in the meshes of his own plot. Now suppose you tell me who you are and just how the miserable affair was managed. At least," he added, gently, "don't cry any more. It will only make you feel bad, and it won't help a bit. I shall not give it up until I have the whole story."

"And neither shall I," laughed the girl, raising a flushed face suffused in smiles, from her hands. "And I am not crying—I'm laughing."

"Why?" asked Allison, sharply, for she was even prettier when she was laughing than when she was sober.

"Ah," she cried, "can't you see what it all is? Haven't you figured it all out yet?"

She certainly was adorable, appealing, and pathetic, as she stood there before him, Allison thought.

"No," he insisted. "I can't seem to put the threads together. If you can, I wish you would. Now, for instance, the dark man who has been hanging around——"

"Is the agent for a steel company whose contract with the Government was suddenly canceled because of crooked work. They are all a crowd of crooks."

"So?" said Allison, a great light beginning to dawn on him. "And how about my stenographer, my real one? Where did she go?"

"She," explained the girl earnestly. "Is a sweetheart of the steel company's agent, the little dark-haired man. He was playing her for a cat's-paw. I—I found it out and took the opportunity to write to her and give her permission to stay home today. She did, and it spoiled the plans of the gang."

"I thought——" began Allison, but the girl interrupted suddenly.

"You thought," she cried, "that I was one of the links in the tangle instead of one of the unravelers. I feel rather proud," she added shyly. "I figured it all out by myself."

Allison felt an overpowering desire to thank her—not with words but with actions. But he couldn't move a step. The girl's eyes had him chained to the spot and he couldn't move.

"Who are you?" he asked finally, in a half whisper.

"I am a newspaper reporter," the girl answered, softly.

There was something in the way she said it that made it sound insincere.

"You are——"

"Oh, don't!" cried the girl, quickly. "The air is getting close in here. Make your boat rise, Mr. Allison, if you can, and I'll give you a story that will cinch the approval and acceptance of the Government!"

Allison's eyes snapped fire. His hands found the pump handles and slowly, carefully, he started the motors. The pumps checked and clashed and the valves snapped. The submarine teetered and rocked for a moment; then the bows raised slowly, steadily, the stern following.

"You beauty!" murmured Allison, thinking of the "Firefly." He glanced up just in time to see a deep flush cover the face of Miss Smith.

"I beg your pardon!" Allison groaned, miserably. "I didn't mean you——" Then he could have bitten his tongue out, for a look of disappointment supplanted the one of embarrassment on the girl's face.

"Daylight! Sunlight!" cried the girl, as the "Firefly" shot to the surface, and Allison turned quietly to aid her up the ladder. He opened the hatch, and then they stepped out upon the narrow deck.

"The land looks welcome," the girl murmured simply. A launch, the one which had been hidden behind the pier, came dashing across the bay. They had evidently been flying back and forth, watching for the rise of the "Firefly."

"A good boat," came a heavy voice from the launch. Another voice answered:

"A master craft, sir, a master craft!"

Allison's heart gave a quick leap. It was the Secretary of the Navy with several junior officers. By this time the launch was alongside. Allison put his hand firmly and decisively upon the little hand which trembled upon the railing.

"Do you mind?" he asked simply, in a whisper.

"Not a mite," the girl answered; then added, "but he may," and she nodded toward the approaching launch.

"The Secretary of the Navy! Why would he care?"

"Because," answered the girl, quietly, "because he is my father."

"Great Scott!" gasped Allison; then

(Continued on page fifteen.)

The Volcano Prisoners

Or, THE SEA COAST QUEEN :-: By WILLIAM H. MANNING

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CHAPTER VI.
WE GO TO THE VOLCANO.

STEVE and I agreed that, not knowing who might be on board the ship, we dared not hail, so, leaving him to guard the girls, I managed to descend the cliff with whole bones. After that I swam to the lesser island.

The silence was unbroken, and, with the ship before me, my fears increased. To go forward was to hazard a shot from either foe or friend, but it must be risked. I slipped along until I stood under the counter but I shrank from climbing. Going up, my head would make a fine target for a marksman on deck.

I tried the experiment of rapping three times on the black bulk with the handle of my knife. It was the watch-call so familiar to sailors, but when I had knocked twice and had no reply, I realized that it was useless. I must climb. I went up until my head rose above the taffrail and paused. In the darkness I could see little more than the bulk of the galley and the three masts, but there was no sign of men. I swung myself over and was on the deck.

Silence continued. No officer walked the space aft, and when I had glided forward I found no sailor by the windlass. It was a dead deck, with bare poles aloft standing skeleton-like above me. Dismay and heart-gripping gloom had me in their clutch then. The place, my home, was like a tomb.

Arousing, I prepared to look below. It was a risky step, for if the natives had driven the crew away they might be lurking in ambush, waiting for just such a visitor. And they might be twenty to one.

It would not do to let such fears master me, so I resumed. First I went to the scuttle and called down into the forecastle, but there was no reply. A like experiment at the companionway was equally fruitless.

Deciding to act with zeal I found a deck-lantern and went to the cabin, where I made a light. The table was in confusion, a chart and other things upon it, but I saw no sign of a struggle with enemies. Then, in turn, I searched staterooms and forecastle, and searched in vain. I was the only person on board.

When I found that not a boat remained I knew the truth. Clearly, the last of the lot had been lowered, floated, and got away. With a mast stepped and the sail drawing the crew had fled and left us to our fate.

Bitter anger came upon me. The desolation was forgotten, for the perfidy of man was a living issue. I laid it all to Barker, who had seen his undone condition with Captain Knapp, and made a cowardly push to clear himself from censure by leaving us to the cannibals. Leaving the ship I returned to the cliff and reported.

"What's to be done?" asked Steve, with singular coolness.

"We can't stay in the ship, for we could not hold it against the islanders. They could set fire to it under our feet. And we have no boat."

"We might build a raft."

"It's no small task for two men to build one that would be weatherly and answer its sail. Besides, the natives would easily overhaul us in their fleet canoes. We must rejoin Captain Knapp."

"But where is he?"

"Yes, where?" I echoed.

"A wild rush to find him will bring us into the hands of the natives. We must hide and wait, watching for the skipper. Yes, hide—but where?"

As I considered his question I was standing with my back to the strait. I had been looking ahead with unseeing eyes, but, as the point was pressed sharply upon me my vision grew alert. Looking, I saw a huge mass standing before me, a black monument in the dark night. It was the old volcano, Hatharo, the Fiery One.

Instantly I had an idea. I recalled what the island queen had said about the peak. Long inactive, it was, she claimed, cold, free from troublesome fumes and gases, and open to an explorer. Best of all, she had said that the "religion," as she called it, of the natives forbade any of them going to the place.

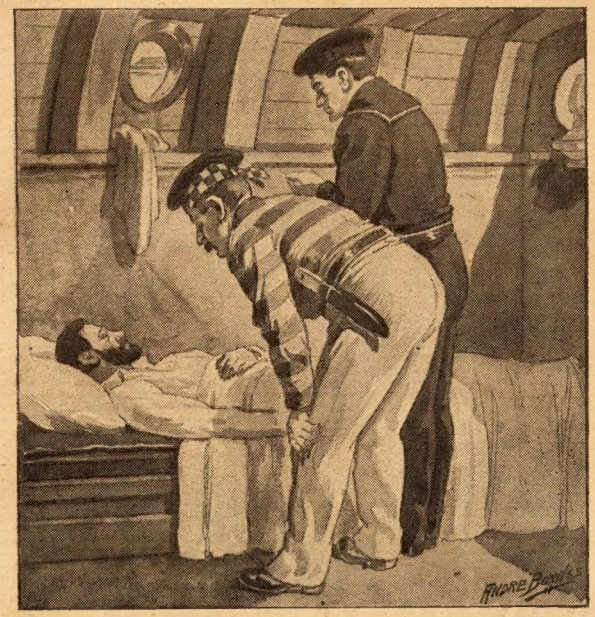
"I have it!" I exclaimed.

"What's the plan?"

"We will go to Hatharo!"

"Hat-ha-ro!" he repeated blankly, slowly, wonderingly.

"Remember what the queen said. The old volcano is dead, free from heat and gases, and left alone by the islanders through some superstition. Really, it is the only place open to us. We will



"We have our skipper!"

go there, and while one of our number ventures out to find Captain Knapp, the rest of us will hide in the heart of Hatharo."

Steve rubbed his chin dubiously, but Mildred broke a long silence.

"Excellent!" she exclaimed. "If the people here fear to visit the mountain, it is just the refuge for us. Let us go, I beseech you. But what shall we live upon, if we are delayed there? We can get no food."

"The ship will supply all we require, and far more. Salted meats, sea-biscuits, rice, and the various other things common to sailors' lives. My mate and I can pack enough to last four persons for many days. I suppose we should also take water, for our chances for getting it there are unknown."

Radd took off his hat and looked hard at the volcano.

"Hatharo, the Fiery One!" he muttered, half-uneasily and half-humorously. "It must have had a bad temper once, but a reformed sinner is generally thought a precious lamb in the fold."

"I understand," interrupted Olive, nervously, "that our stay there is only for a few days?"

"I hope only for a few hours. Still, we cannot rely positively upon finding Captain Knapp tonight, and we must omit no precautions. If we are supplied with food we can feel easy."

"But to take refuge in a volcano! It makes me shiver!"

"How about the natives?" asked Mildred, reprovingly.

"Oh! those horrible creatures! You are right, sir, and I do not object. Pray forget my fears, and if I can help in any way, command me."

"Let us both help!" added Mildred, quickly.

"For the present there is nothing for you to do, ladies," I replied, "but I must not lose another moment. Now to get food and water. I will return to the ship, leaving Radd again with you——"

Both girls demurred, urging the need of haste and advising that we both go aboard the Ann, and as there was no visible danger above, I let it go so. Food was easy to carry away, but water less manageable. With all settled, Steve and I went down the cliff again. While we were crossing the strait he spoke seriously.

"That volcano is our only hope, mate, but won't the pesky thing either burn us alive in its crater or smother us with its gases?"

"We heard it said that it is dead and odorless."

"But if nobody on the island dares go there, how did the queen know that fact? Who is to prove that it's not both hot and poisonous?"

It was a worrisome idea, but it could not be harbored.

"Be that as it may, we must go there. I feel rather sure it is as dead as it looks to be. Now for the ship."

"The land hereabouts has a queer feel under foot, Tom. It's natural it should be wet after the gale, but seems to me it's funny old land, anyhow. It slushes under our tread like a sponge."

"I've noticed that odd feature, but swamps are not rare. Now to get aboard."

We ascended, recovered the lantern and went about our preparations, but without showing a light on deck. It was not exactly easy to select articles with so little time for consideration, for we could not choose like mariners going out in a boat. We must take what we could carry and no more.

As soon as possible we gathered together our selection—food, water, a kettle, a bottle of brandy, blankets for the girls, weapons, a hatchet, the lantern and a few other articles. When we lifted our packs we found them heavy.

"Cuss them scamps who run away an' left us!" snapped Radd. "They should have stuck to the Ann until all hands got back here, an' then we could have left in high feather. How is it now? Our skipper is missin', an' his boat crew with him. Barker—blame him!—has sneaked off like a white-livered cur, an' we—we are here! Oh! yes, there is no doubt as to where we be! Chalk out a circle on this deck an' you have us. We are here!"

"Well, Steve——"

"Tom, I reckon you are about to give me sixty for a grumbler. If you will consider that you've done it an' I'm squelched, 'spose we go?"

He swung up his burden and I followed suit. He had grumbled, sure enough, but I had no fault to find. Steve was all right, and full of pluck. Really, he had only put my own thoughts into words, and my heart was hot against Mate Barker. I could imagine him cutting the seaboard miles away, the long boat heeling under the strain of her mast, and all hands bound for safety. We—was there not excuse for my bitterness of mind?—we were abandoned!

In a few seconds Radd and I were below with our burdens, including the darkened lantern. At the water's edge he paused and looked back at the silent ship.

"Poor old hooker!" he muttered.

With this he plunged in, we swam the strait and were soon at the top of the cliff. Mildred and Olive were there, and we were ready to go. The girls insisted upon relieving us of a part of our weight, and as we had rather overdone the matter, their help was useful.

We made for the volcano at once, and crossed the intervening ground without adventure, arriving at the base of the mountain. Then the ascent began. For a few hundred feet there was vegetation and dwarfed trees, and after that a line of dead, fire-blackened saplings, the latter of which I hailed with pleasure. They would furnish fuel, if they could be secured.

The sky had cast off a part of its clouds and we had more light. Reaching the lava-strewn, barren higher stretch, we had the bleakness of the mountain fully under view, but we made no comments. Half an hour later we arrived where the side of Hatharo was seamed with clefts, as if by a giant's dividing sword, but we went farther yet. At last I felt that we were close enough to the frowning summit, and I pointed to a black cleft.

"We will enter here!" I said, trying to speak calmly, but feeling an oppression and painful uneasiness upon me.

Nobody objected, and we did as I had said. The heart of the Fiery One lay before us. What else was there no man knew.

CHAPTER VII.
ABANDONED.

After a few rods the avenue bowed a trifle to one side, and, as we were moving in total darkness and might run into a pit, we ventured to make a light. I held the lantern aloft and we looked about us. On two sides were walls of dull black rock, or volcanic deposit; a bleak, forbidding view, while, thirty feet above, the sides ended and we saw the gray of the heavens.

"Not so bad!" remarked Steve heartily. "Cleaner than a sailor's boardin'-house in New York or Frisco, an' a heap quieter. Rent is reasonable, too, an' no taxes. Why, mate, I rather like it here!"

"No annoying piano in the next house, and no crying children!" added Mildred, bravely, though I noticed that her smile was forced. "Why, I don't believe we shall hear any vexatious gossip here, either!"

"And no barking dogs!", said Olive, seeking to be brave, though her voice trembled. "The pests of civilization are missing."

I felt like shaking the girls by the hand. Their effort to be composed and save us from complaints were admirable, and, really, this took a great burden from my mind. All of our assumed lightness, however, did not blind us to the facts. We were in the heart of Hatharo, the Fiery One, and the temper of a volcano was not to be relied upon. I knew nothing about such things, but suspected, what I afterward knew, that we were in a region of hardened lava. Once it had flowed there, but it was now rock, rent and fissured.

As we gazed all jests died away. The effects of the bleakness grew rather than died away, and we realized that it was no trifling matter to take refuge there. Up to that time we had caught no volcanic fumes, and the temperature was all we could wish, but this was no guarantee as to what lay beyond. One thing we knew—the cannibals were back of the mountain.

Resuming our progress, we found the avenue continued for a hundred feet, when it ended at a cross-cleft. As we afterward learned there was no system in the clefts, but that was rather pleasing than otherwise.

After penetrating perhaps a hundred yards into the heart of the black monster, we came to the edge of a little open space like a chamber. It offered nothing to tempt us to stay, but it was one of many, and as some search we found what we wanted. Several chambers lay in a line, connected by corridors, and roofed over. Here was chance for all we desired. We could stand, sit or recline upon the rocky floor, and the light of the lantern would not betray us. Also, unless we erred, a fire might safely be built. At this point Radd grew active.

"Well, Tom," he said, "you stay and make the house comfortable for the ladies, an' I'll be off to find Captain Knapp an' our mates."

"The trip will be dangerous, and I'd rather go—"

"You risked your life at the ship," he briskly interrupted. "My turn now. I'm goin'!"

I was still undecided when I caught Mildred's eye and paused. As she afterward said, she felt full confidence in Steve, but it was her hope that I would stay with her and Olive. Her eyes told something of this, and I yielded the point. I went a few yards back with Steve and we talked briefly. It vaguely seemed to me that I should advise and caution him, but I realized my inability to do anything practical, while his sturdy but modest courage showed that he had best be left to himself. Presently we shook hands and he started on his hazardous venture, leaving me painfully apprehensive I would never see him again.

Returning to the sisters I found them unpacking the goods we had brought, and this reminded me of a task for myself. Taking the packing cords already used I made two trips to the area of dead saplings, selected fallen specimens that satisfied me and backed them to our refuge.

Mildred and Olive had been busy, and our "house," as we came to term it, was in order. One chamber was fitted up as a kitchen, it being one where Steve and

I believed there was a way aloft that would serve as a chimney and carry off all smoke. This was established as true when we built a fire and cooked and ate our first meal in the heart of Hatharo, the Fiery One.

By the time we had eaten the sisters were drooping with fatigue, and they retired to the chamber selected as theirs, spread blankets and soon were asleep. I tried to keep a careful vigil sitting on guard, but, I am ashamed to say, fell asleep.

When I was finally awake I found with dismay that I had been lost to the world for three or four hours. All was well near me, but I was victim to the horrible fears that matters had gone ill with Steve, and that my period of sleep might have been the means of my failing to hear a call for help from my stanch ally.

I hastened outside. It was still night, though a slight graying in the east betokened the approach of day. The island, still dark, was apparently as free from human motion as my own vicinity.

Ten minutes I stood quiet and watched. Then, by mere chance, an odd happening came under my notice. Far down in the valley, a full mile away, a bright flash leaped up like miniature lightning, and the size of it and the other things made its nature clear to me. A pistol had been fired.

It was startling for I could find no explanation except that Steve Radd was in trouble. I reasoned that he had come upon the islanders and that—then the flash was repeated, once, twice, three times.

There was no more. It was all over, and no sound had drifted to me. Greatly worried I moved about restlessly, but in less than ten minutes a rattling of stones near my post was followed by sight of objects in human form that were moving directly toward me.

Grasping my pistol I waited, determined to defend the cleft from intrusion, but suddenly my eyes told me a joyful story. Two men were at hand, and they were Steve and Seth Styles. Mutual hails passed between us, and we were soon shaking hands violently.

"But Captain Knapp?" I demanded. "What of him?"

"Haven't seen a sign o' him," Radd replied. "I've been pretty much all over the island, and even right among the cannibals, but no sign did I see of the skipper or his party, free or prisoners. Comin' back I happened on Seth by mere good luck. Of course he come here with me."

"Styles," I cried, "you stayed on board the Ann with Barker. What took place there? Where are the crew?"

"Barker and they has set sail in the long boat, gone for good."

"And we are abandoned?"

"Sartain as you live. A fine trick they played on me, too,"

"Tell me all about what happened."

"Deviltry happened!" cried the veteran, fiercely. "There was more vile rottenness in that crew than in all these cannibals. You want to know what happened, an' you shall. Well, that native canoe you sighted come along an' attacked us, but when we fired a few volleys they was glad to get out. They left eight men dead, an' we didn't have even one wounded.

"After that lesson we had reason to believe we could hold the ship indefinitely, but you didn't come back, an' neither did the skipper an' his boat's-crew. After a while Barker called all hands an' got eloquent over what he claimed was the fact that our lives depended upon out takin' to the long-boat an' sailing away for good. He an' Dave Girdle had cooked up that idea together, an' of course, it was all to save Barker's reputation, he bein' in disgrace aft.

"Right there I did some talkin', an' I admit I was sassy as a schoolmarm. I talked as savage as you please, an' sure did riddle them with hot words, reproaches, taunts, an' general abuse. Notice what follered.

"We got the long-boat to the water by rollin' her, stowed food an' water, an' was ready to go. Yes, I was with them. What was I to do? You an' the captain and the rest ashore might all be dead—yes, I was goin' with them. But I didn't.

"With all hands in the boat Barker sang out he had left the compass in the Ann's cabin, an' asked me to go fer it. See what a big fool a man can be! I went, failed to discover it, and come back on deck to find the boat gone, far away and gettin' steadily farther. That compass business was a trick to leave me behind.

"They went, hang their cowardly, black hides! I stuck to the Ann for a while, an' then come ashore to see if any o' you was alive, an' after much dodgin' of the cannibals I happened on Steve, Tom, matey. I'm glad I'm here rather than in that runaway boat."

I shook his hand again, and as violently as when he came.

"You are like a new right arm to us, Seth, and you can guess whether I am glad. Welcome, mate, welcome! But, Seth, we are among cannibals, and we have no boat in which to get away. What are we to do?"

This problem remained unanswered when we sat down to the breakfast Mildred and Olive had prepared, at which time we renewed it. The boat in the native village we could not use, because no three men could carry it back to the water, and all hands admitted that a raft was a forlorn hope.

"But," said Olive, who had been listening attentively, "can't you get a boat from our former vessel, the brig Sunshine?"

"What!" I cried is a boat still there?"

"I don't know," I replied. "We've already told you that the crew of the Sunshine deserted much as the men of the Happy Ann did. They took only the larger of the two boats, and the other may be left."

"Have not the islanders been there?" "I don't know. Mildred and I were captured when on shore."

"They may not have found the brig at all," Mildred urged eagerly.

We had an idea, and soon went to use our eyes. We saw the abandoned Happy Ann and saw natives in numbers that rather staggered us, but could not pick up the brig, so I took the glass and climbed to the very summit of the Fiery One. Once there I had the great central crater at my feet, a yawning gulf that was black and looked to be dead, but I gave it only brief attention. Twenty minutes later I was again with my companions.

"I've located the brig," I announced. "She's lying near land, but does not seem aground. She's our hope, and I'm going to visit her."

CHAPTER VIII.

AN ASTONISHING ADVENTURE.

It was three hours after dark, that night, when Steve Radd and I neared the place where I had located the brig Sunshine. Leaving Seth to protect the girls we had skulked along the shore like shadows, fearful of running upon the natives, but keenly eager as to our errand. For during the day a theory had been advanced and discussed that thrilled every soul of our party.

Unless the brig had been stove in when she went aground, we hoped to gain possession of her and have a craft far better than a frail boat. Imagine, then, the tension of mind Steve and I were under as we went. Were we near rescuing ourselves, or to be bitterly disappointed?

At last we broke from the cover of bushes and had the faint sea swell before us, and out fast-traveling gaze raised something more.

"The brig!" softly exclaimed my mate, his voice breaking a bit.

She was there. She lay with her bows to the land, so close that, every time her stern lifted on the swell, there was a rustle of leaves as her bowsprit sunk and rose among them. The deck was so dark that we could see nothing, so we waited and watched. Ten minutes passed without developments, and I grew impatient.

"I'm going to board her," I whispered. "Come on!"

"All right, but do it softly. The heathen may be there thick as flies, lyin' ready for just such a move on our part. Gently does it!"

We skulked along soft-footed, keeping in the cover of the trees as long as possible. Presently my hand was on the bowsprit, and with great caution we took the final steps and were on the deck of the Sunshine. Once more we waited, and with that dark inboard expanse before us and the knowledge that the brig was in herself a tragedy of the sea, and might now harbor life-seeking foes, I admit that the situation tried my nerves.

Finally I broke away from the painful incubus that was upon me.

"Keep to the larboard," I directed. "We'll meet aft."

We made the journey without mishap or alarming discovery.

"Seems to be nobody here," said Steve, "but I notice there is no boat. What do you make of the condition of the brig? She sets low."

"She may be deep with cargo, for her channels are surely well down. We'll sound the well later. The chief question is, what's below?"

We listened at the companionway and the forecastle, but as the quiet continued we ventured on more decisive action. Failing to find a deck-lantern we moved down the companion and entered the cabin. With growing confidence we located the swinging lamp and lighted it.

A scene of far greater confusion was revealed than I had seen in the Happy Ann. The furniture was tipped over and, in part, broken, while bedding from the connecting rooms littered the way. The open doors invited search, but Steve suddenly grasped my arm.

"What's that?" he demanded, huskily. "Sounded like a groan," I replied, as much startled as he.

"It was just that. Say, what have we struck here? What black mystery is shut up with us?"

"There was human distress in that sound," I returned.

"Somebody dyin' in one of them rooms."

Anything seemed better than waiting there, and I moved forward with my pistol advanced for quick use. In a short time we had learned that not one of the staterooms was tenanted.

"He must be down in the run," said Steve. "I'll have a look."

We were moving when we noticed a ribbon-red pattern among the pile of bedding. After we had it alight we lifted the trap, and, when nothing more was heard, Steve lowered himself. In the run he found the usual odds and ends, but when his face reappeared to me it bore a sheepish grin.

"Matey," he said feebly, "we dreamed that groan. Very likely a whale blowed somewheres hard aboard, an' our imagination did the rest——"

Again the groan came to us, this time louder, longer, and more harrowing. I saw Steve's face gray in the lantern light.

"The ship is haunted!" he gasped.

I had a different idea, for this time I had practically located the sound. Bidding my mate follow, I ran to the deck and peered over the rail at the weather waist.

"Hallo!" I called cautiously.

"What is it?" Steve asked. "Don't let an islander fool you."

"I see a black object in the water that must be a man. This must be seen to. Watch while I work."

I swung myself down and soon had hold of the man. It was no native, for he wore the garments of civilization and had a short beard. Further survey showed that he was bound to a log, and that, adrift with the tide, he had been bumping against the hull. Failing to receive an answer to my questions I bade Steve cast me a line, and when it came dangling down I first used my knife to cut the man clear of the log and then took a hitch around him.

"Haul away!" I called to my shipmate.

Steve pulled, and with me fending off to avoid possible injury from the brig's overhang we hoisted him to the deck. My mate expressed various sentiments, but I had an idea and was not a little wrought up by our discovery. Not daring to make a light there I asked for Radd's help, and we conveyed the man to the cabin. There, with the light falling upon him, we made the final discovery. We had brought up the form of Captain Knapp, destitute of conscious life, but still breathing.

"Beard o' Father Neptune!" gasped Steve, blankly.

"We have our skipper, but it's a sorry state he is in. Steve, man, what has happened to him?"

"I don't understand. The whole business is too deep for me. No native would tie him to a log, as you say you found him, an' why should anybody else do it? Not himself, nor yet his boat's crew, so why is it so? Deeper mystery than I can grapple with. He's the same as a dead man, too, an' we shall never hear his story."

"I'm not so sure of that. His pulse-beats are by no means faint, an' we may hope to bring him back to life. Hunt for brandy. We will do all we can."

Radd replied heartily and moved promptly. The spirit was found, and, prying the teeth apart, we poured a dram into his mouth. There was no reviving sign, but the drink did not gurgle back, which was a good symptom. I fell to chafing his arms.

"We will bring him out of it!" I said, as cheerfully as possible.

"Bravo, mate! But, say, suppose we do? How can we get him to the refuge, more than a mile away? He can't walk. How will we get him there?"

It was a staggering question, and I paused and looked at my mate. My mind moved swiftly.

"Steve," I soon said, "go on deck and look at the condition of the brig. See if she is seaworthy. We have got our captain back, and we can't carry him by hand. The brig is our one resort."

He scurried away, and after getting Knapp into a berth I spent the next five minutes in other efforts to revive him. Then Steve came back triumphant.

"Glorious!" he reported. "No water in the well, canvas on the yards ready to loosen, and, best of all, the turn of the tide has set the brig fully afloat. Hear the sea lap at her! We are ten fathoms from land."

It certainly was glorious, and we went to work with a will, had the gaskets off quickly and the sails spread, so that it was scarcely more than half an hour before we filled, got her under steerageway, and drew farther from land with the Sunshine answering her helm neatly.

Then we sailed around the west side of the island, drawing near to the north side of the grim, black volcano. My mate shook his head gloomily.

"I don't trust that old Fiery One!" he muttered. "He may be dead outside, but I'll bet the hot kettle is boiling deep down in him."

"I hope," I replied, "that we may shortly be indifferent. Very soon we shall have Hatharo for a shield, and then we'll fetch her to and bring Seth and the girls down. After that we've only to sail away for good."

"The volcano shoves its north side clean to the sea. Dips its forefoot, so to speak. Well, all the better for us."

In another ten minutes we had the mountain hard aboard. I saw that the shore curved, which seemed to be further good luck, and we swung around and had the mass of the peak off our beam. It looked unusually black in that quarter, but we decided to creep close and bring up in a little cove that indented the uplift like a cup. Just then our main consideration was given to the depth of water, and we looked hard for reefs. Better for us had we been less concerned as to soundings.

Steve was suddenly impressed with a new idea, and he left the starboard waist and hastily crossed to larboard.

"Say!" he exclaimed, "there is a stiff current here, setting in toward land. I don't fully like it. Put her off a few points an' climb for open water or we may go ashore!"

It was easily said, but, as was soon proved, it was an impossibility. We had passed the point of the mountain, and the wind failed up abruptly, blanketing us effectually. The sails slatted and then showed a tendency to hug the masts, while the wheel ceased to pull and the brig lost steerageway.

"Thunder!" cried Radd, "we are going ashore!"

I was no longer of use where I was, and I ran to the bows. Even while we talked we had run into a worse part of the current, and it was swift as a race-horse. Strong and riotous with foam, it was surely carrying us helplessly toward the danger. I looked that way.

"Tom," shouted my mate, "what do you make of that black gulf?"

"Why, it looks to me like a vast gap in the volcano!"

"It is, it surely is! The mountain is hollow, and we are being driven inside by this rush of water. Let's jump overboard——"

"Impossible! No man can breast that current. Our one hope is to stick to the ship."

"But we are now at the foot of the mountain. The volcanic fires are there, if anywhere. We shall be burned alive!"

"If we could get an anchor down——"

"Too late! We are enterin' the hollow place!"

It was true. Swept resistlessly by the current, we were driving toward the heart of the Fiery One!

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

Celestial Ingenuity.

"I hope our dear old Dr. Wu Tingfang is on the right side in these Chinese troubles," said a diplomat at a dinner in Washington. "Dr. Wu," he continued, "used to tell me many illuminating anecdotes about the Chinese character. I remember one about ingenuity.

"A Chinaman, the anecdote ran, found his wife lying dead in a field one morning; a tiger had killed her. The Chinaman went home, procured some arsenic, and, returning to the field, sprinkled it over the corpse. The next day the tiger's dead body lay beside the woman's. The Chinaman sold the tiger's skin to a mandarin, and its body to a physician to make fear-cure powders, and with the proceeds he was able to buy a younger wife."

Grieved.

"Now, what are you feeling bad about?"

"Oh, I am utterly wretched. He doesn't love me, as I love him."

"How do you know?"

"Why, we discovered last evening that the day we have set for our wedding day is the day of the opening of the baseball season, and also there's a big bargain sale on at one of the downtown stores."

"And he wanted to change the date of the wedding?"

"We both wanted to change it. He couldn't miss the opening game, and I just couldn't dream of missing those bargains."

"Well, then I——"

"But he wanted to have the wedding a day later, while I suggested having it a day sooner."

Fatal Twist.

"At last, Henry, the question of votes for women is to be submitted to the people."

"So I see."

"Henry, you will admit that women are as intelligent as the men."

"Freely, I admit that."

"And that as women pay taxes they ought to have a say as to how their money is to be spent."

"That seems reasonable. But let us discuss the question. I earn the money we have, don't I?"

"Yes."

"And I bring it all home to you?"

"Yes, as you should."

"But do I have any voice in how that money is to be spent?"

A few minutes later he put on his hat and coat and left the house, regretting that he had given that twist to the argument.

Who He Was.

"See that man over there with the black mustache?" said Tommy.

"Yes," said the visitor.

"Well," said Tommy, "he is the author of one of the most popular serials in a hundred years."

"Really?" said the visitor. "Why, he doesn't look like a literary man."

"No," said Tommy, "He isn't—he's the inventor of popped grits, the best cereal on the market."

The Diamond Mouse

Or, THE BLACK DOCTOR'S PLOT

By Captain Jack Judson

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CHAPTER IX.

SYLVAN MAKES A CAPTURE.

IT WAS all over at last, and the last of the Cheverly's reposed in the God's acre not far from the manor house. Tongues will chatter. Rumors that Lady Constance had been helped out of the world by ruthless hands had percolated through the neighborhood, and a country squire had held an inquest. The few witnesses who had been summoned before this august body of know-nothings threw but little light on the tragedy. In fact, like the octopus, they only muddied the waters. Doctor Gurth was not sure a murder had been committed. He declared it possible, to say nothing of probable, that Lady Constance in a fit of dementia had strangled herself. There being no witnesses to the manner of her taking off, this fact, coupled with the Black Doctor's prominence, weighed much in the minds of the coroner's jury, and after a short deliberation the wonderful aggregation brought in a verdict of suicide.

A smile flitted over Sylvan's countenance when the verdict reached him. He could not shut out the marks of fingers on Lady Constance's throat, fingers which he would have wagered his life were not her own. But whose?

Estelle was now the sole tenant of Ravenswood, with the exception of a few servants, including Selina, the octoroon girl. She had brought the girl into the house that she might have with her an intelligent companion, though one of a different race.

Selina acquainted Estelle with her adventure with the White Woman and was forbidden to spread that episode abroad. Halco had not been seen since the night when Sylvan saw a face at the window of Lady Constance's bedchamber. The hat which he had torn from the head of the person whom he had pursued after his leap from the portico one of the slaves had identified as the dwarf's, and the young man had adjured the black to keep the secret. For several days the neighborhood was scoured for Halco, but without avail. The very earth seemed to have swallowed the deformed.

Sylvan's last interview with Estelle was brief and, so far as he could render it, comforting. He was going back to Richmond, not for long he hoped, and for a purpose. His audience with Doctor Gurth at Graystone had but strengthened his resolution to baffle this cool-headed man of mystery by whose arts Estelle had been ensnared.

What he hoped to unearth in the capital of the Old Dominion he confided to no one. If he failed—but he would not fail, for was not his happiness and Estelle's at stake—he would never again look upon womankind with love in his heart.

The theft of the Diamond Mouse was a mystery as deep as the death of Lady Constance. Sylvan did not believe that the same hand had perpetrated both crimes, yet he would not say that they were not in some manner connected. He took his departure with Estelle's kiss on his brow and with her last words breathing hope in his ears.

Thus Ravenswood settled down to await the future, which was overshadowed by the machinations of the Man of Graystone, behind whose walls, as Sylvan knew, dwelt the White Woman. He was leaving Estelle in the coils of the Black Doctor. He had heard that man declare that within a fortnight the heiress of Ravenswood would become his wife, and was it not so nominated in the will? Sylvan shut his hands hard, and in his anger cursed the woman who slept on the pine-clad hill. He had made a note of the witnesses to Lady Constance's will. One of these persons was dead, as Estelle had told him, and the whereabouts of the other were unknown.

It was night when he reached Richmond. That Southern city set upon seven hills was enjoying the last delights of summer. A light breeze stole through the lordly trees on Capitol Hill, and the spot was thronged by hundreds of people drawn thither to escape the heat on the streets below.

The park lay in Sylvan's way, and when he reached it he penetrated to the center and took a seat where he could commune with himself and watch the flow of people that moved in many directions. He wanted a place to himself where he could think calmly and at the same time be amused.

He was the sole occupant of the bench upon which he was seated, but he was not left long in this seclusion. An old man leading a little grandchild came forward, and with a nod to Sylvan appropriated the other end of the bench. The little girl ran off and joined some children of her own tender years.

"That's childhood for you!" said the old man, with a pleased look at Sylvan. "What is it that Goldsmith says? 'Sports of childhood satisfy the child.' Is not that it?"

"You have rightly quoted the tender Oliver," replied Sylvan. "It would be nice if we could go back to childhood and forget the present pangs of life."

"Yes," sighed the old man. "I used to tell Lady Constance of Ravenswood this very thing."

Sylvan started and almost let a cry slip out between his lips. He eyed the old man a moment and a singular thought flashed across his mind.

"Did you know the lady of Ravenswood?" he queried.

"Who knew her better than Mark Halliday?"

The name went through Sylvan Roche like an electric current.

"You are the man I'm looking for?" he cried, grasping the Virginian's arm, drawing from him a puzzled expression.

"And who are you?"

"I am Sylvan Roche. And you are one of the witnesses to Lady Constance's will?"

"I remember that," cried the other. "I signed the will along with Considine, the overseer of the manor. How is Lady Constance?"

"She is dead."

The face of the old man changed color.

"You are to choose between the bottle and the dagger!"

"Who gets the manor? The young lady?" he exclaimed. "Or does that devil of a Black Doctor get the biggest slice?"

Sylvan had to smile in spite of himself. Here was a man who entertained no good opinion of Doctor Gurth.

"We will discuss that matter later on," he said, becoming calm again. "Who was present when the will was signed?"

"Who but the man whom I always believed had a hand in its making?" was the quick retort. "There are wills and wills, but I never heard of a woman signing one under duress."

"Did you read it?"

"Bless you, no," cried the old man. "I remember the circumstance as well as though it happened but last night. I had gone over to the manor to see Considine. We were called into the house by that imp of darkness called Halco. In the library we found Doctor Gurth and Lady Constance. She did not seem herself. She lay back in her chair like a person in a stupor. The Black Doctor placed the will before us, and when he asked Lady Constance if it was her last will and testament she nodded her head and went off in a faint. That's the whole story, sir."

"But the will was in her handwriting?" said Sylvan.

"I don't know. It may have been. It's curious about that man Considine. He afterward went insane. He used to say that one night something stung him in his sleep. It was in this city he died."

"But you? Nothing has ever stung you?"

"No, but—look yonder! Over there is that slimy imp of perdition, Halco, the dwarf!"

Sylvan followed the old man's look. A misshapen figure was slipping through the crowd not far away. "Remain here till I return," he said, hastily. "I'll bring that monstrosity back with me if I can."

"Beware of his teeth, sir. He can bite."

Estelle's lover was gone in a moment. Bolting through the crowds he faced up the hill leading to the old capitol. Halco was still in sight. There was no doubt that the dwarf had recognized Sylvan nor that he was trying to elude him. He darted in and out among the people like a fox. Sylvan, eager of purpose and youthful, gained upon him.

Halco at last came to bay among a throng of folk. The hand of his pursuer fell upon his shoulder like a trip-hammer. The dwarf winced, and his face darkened with a vengeful scowl.

"I want you, Halco!" said Sylvan. "You are trying to escape me. You eluded me at Ravenswood, but now——"

Instead of drawing back the imp threw up one of his ape-like arms and his prehensile hand struck Sylvan full in the face. It stung like a bunch of nettles.

"Take that! and that!" he hissed. "The man who stops Halco does so at his peril!"

Despite the pain of the blow, Sylvan held on to his prisoner. He dragged him back and by main strength hustled him toward the spot he had just left.

"This is Master Halco," he said to the old man, when he crunched the dwarf upon the bench with no gentleness. "Is not this the imp of Ravenswood?"

"It's the same bundle of devilry!" grinned the Virginian. "I found him in the shadow of my house but last night."

Sylvan shook Halco till his yellow teeth rattled like crazy castanets.

"What is your answer?" he cried. "You can't deny your identity, for hell never gave birth to two such creatures as you."

Halco's reply was a fiendish grin.

"Now, sir," continued the lover of Estelle. "I want the truth. Who killed Lady Constance and why? We'll dismiss the theft of the Diamond Mouse for the present. Out with the truth, or I'll crush every bone in your body!"

CHAPTER X.

BOTTLE AND BLADE.

Sylvan looked abundantly able to carry out his threat. Halco cringed before the young man, his hands shut and his eyeballs aflame. Instead of speaking his lips came together with a formidable snap, and Sylvan began to think he had caught a Tartar.

Halliday from the other end of the bench watched the silent battle with unabated interest.

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"The truth!" cried Sylvan, after a pause. "Aren't you going to unseal your accursed lips?"

The dwarf grinned. Estelle's lover raised his hand and his look portended danger to the imp. All at once Halco sprang to his feet, and striking backward with his hand, sent Sylvan in a recoil, and before he could recover, the deformed was bounding down the hill to the street below.

He was out of sight even as Sylvan stared after him, obliged to swallow his chagrin as best he could.

"Better luck next time, Mr. Roche," sympathized Halliday. "That toad has the speed of a foxhound."

Baffled when he thought he was on the verge of the secret of Ravenswood, Sylvan rose to his feet and took a long breath. He knew it would be of no use to follow his escaped quarry, so bidding Halliday good night after obtaining his address, he pushed down to the lighted streets.

If he could have followed Halco he would have seen that individual let himself into an unpretentious house near the river. The dwarf crept upstairs and locked a door behind him. The room was poorly furnished with a chair, a table, and a cot in one corner.

"Ho! ho!" laughed Halco, throwing himself upon the chair. "Mr. Sylvan thought he had me, but he now knows that there's many a slip between cup and lip. And there was old Halliday! What brought those two together? Accident? I don't know."

He took some food from a cupboard set in the wall and began to eat voraciously.

"I wonder how things are going up at Ravenswood?" he suddenly ejaculated. "The Doctor has full swing there, no doubt, and I am here hiding like a fox from his hunters. It's not fair, not fair at all. If I could go back there! If I only dared!"

When he had swept the platter before him clean of everything on it, he rose and stretched himself. There was a wolfish gleam in his eyes and suddenly he struck the table with his open hand.

"I'll go back one of these days!" he exclaimed. "I'll go back and feather my nest. I'm not going to rot here with hunger at my door and afraid of my own shadow. If I can't get my price at Ravenswood, I can at Graystone."

He broke out into loud laughter at his own words. The merriment was quickly subdued by a sound which fell suddenly upon his ears. He bounded across the room and put his ear to the door. A rap startled him. Halco did not respond, but listened with his breath held back amid the tense stillness. Perhaps Sylvan had come.

The rapping was repeated. Halco glided across the room and took a revolver from a garment that swung from a peg in one corner. With his long fingers about the butt of the weapon he went back to the door.

"Open the door!" said a voice outside.

"For whom?" asked the dwarf.

"For a friend."

Halco laid his hand on the key, but hesitated. The voice had a familiar sound, but yet he dared not pull the portal ajar.

"It's Dragon, sir," continued the one outside.

At this the deformed turned the key in the lock and stood face to face with the Cerberus of Graystone. Dragon slipped in with his luminous eyes glued upon the dwarf, and halted in the middle of the room. Halco kept his hand at the revolver and watched the Black Doctor's man with eyes that never blinked.

The physical difference between the pair was striking. Halco was but an atom compared to Dragon. He reached but a trifle above the big man's waist, and the only advantage he had lay in his long arms, which were marvelous.

"Throw your weapon into yon corner!" commanded Dragon, in tones which admitted of no equivocation.

The dwarf hesitated.

"At once!" and the clinched hand of the Black Doctor's servant was lifted above Halco's head like a sledge.

Back across the room went the revolver and dropped upon the floor with a dead sound. Dragon, still eyeing the dwarf, took from his pocket a small vial, which he placed upon the table. Then he drew forth a dagger which he clutched tightly with his big brown fingers.

"You are to choose between vial and dagger," he said, in soul-thrilling tones.

The eyes of the dwarf roved from blade to bottle and came slowly back to the giant. His face had changed from a brown to a pasty white. He hardly seemed to breathe.

"Is there no alternative?" he gasped.

"None under Heaven!" was the pitiless response.

"Did the Doctor send you?"

"Never mind by whose command I came hither. It is the bottle or the steel!"

"What is in that devilish vial?"

"Cyanide!"

The teeth of the dwarf came together like the jaws of a steel trap, but he uttered no sound. He had been cleverly caught by this executioner and was at his mercy.

"I'll keep my tongue," he suddenly cried, as the fear of death pounded at his heart. "I swear, Dragon, that my lips will remain as mute as the lips of the dead!"

A grim smile permeated the face of the man who heard the promise. He advanced a step, and his eyes glanced toward the vial. Halco must have seen that there could be no compromise.

"The vial or the steel!" said Dragon.

"The Black Doctor is a devil!" cried the cornered dwarf. "He dare not trust Halco."

"He trusts no one but Dragon," was the answer.

The dwarf let his eyes wander once more to the poison on the table. He knew the swift death that lurked in the bottle. All at once his hand shot toward it like a spider pouncing upon a fly, and his fingers gripped it ferociously.

"A drop will bring eternal oblivion," said Dragon, coolly. "In a half-second you will be either seraph or devil."

A sudden thought which whirled through the dwarf's brain brought a strange glitter to his eyes.

"What if your master is already baffled?" he cried. "What if my secret is already in the hands of one who will crush all in the end?"

Dragon knew what he meant, but could hardly believe. What if Halco had prepared for just such an emergency and had sold his secret to some one? But no! he would not do this, fertile as his brain was. Dragon broke into a laugh of incredulity.

"You can't lie your life into a longer span," he said, mercilessly. "It is the bottle or the blade!"

The ruse, which was a lie, had failed. The next moment Halco raised the vial and held it for a second before his hideous face. Suddenly he threw it against the wall, and it crashed with a hollow sound.

"Wretch!" roared Dragon. "You refuse the vial to accept the steel."

The hand which he sent toward the dwarf touched nothing but air. Halco was at the window on the street side of the room, and was wrenching at the sash with the mien of a maniac. Dragon bounded at him, a tigerish cry on his lips, and as he threw out his hands something plunged across the sill, and he stood alone in the little chamber. Halco had eluded him at the last moment.

It was not far to the sidewalk, but still the drop was dangerous, yet when Dragon protruded his head from the room and looked downward, he saw nothing. He turned away with a growl.

"Fool I am to have trusted the imp of blackness!" he exclaimed. "I should have given him no choice. Sold his secret, eh? Never! Halco is no imbecile."

Dragon hastened from the room and went down the stairs by which he had gained the dwarf's lodgings. He was at war with himself.

"The fox does not always keep under cover," he cried, as a ray of hope illumined his horizon. "The wolf must come forth for food and drink. And when he does the hunter will be not far away."

With this sage reflection he put off, and was soon lost to the lights of Richmond. His mission had failed. What irritated, maddened him, was the fact that he had been beaten by a human atom. The thought seared his soul like a red-hot iron. He growled his chagrin under his breath, but at last, with a laugh for Halco's cunning, he plunged into a side street and was gone.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RETURN OF THE MOUSE.

Whilst the events we have just described were transpiring in the capital of the Old Dominion, matters at Ravenswood were hardly less exciting. Left to herself in the manor house Estelle was hoping that, for the time, at least, she was rid of the presence of the Black Doctor. The trend events had taken gave her poignant sorrow, and coupled with this were the veiled happenings of the future. She looked for a message from Sylvan, but as several days had passed with no news from him, her solicitude for his welfare increased.

It was the third night after Sylvan's departure from Ravenswood when Estelle was suddenly confronted in the red parlor by Selina, the octoroon girl, whose face betrayed excitement which she vainly endeavored to conceal.

"What is it?" demanded the beautiful girl, as Selina trembled before her. "You look as though you had seen a ghost in the grounds."

"Not a ghost, but the White Woman!" cried Selina, and then she seemed to lose her tongue.

Estelle sprang to her feet and started across the room.

"Come!" she exclaimed. "Show me where this woman is. We must trap her if we can."

Selina, with suddenly renewed courage, led the way from the house and pointed down through the trees quivering in the rich moonlight.

"She was out yonder by the Retreat," she whispered.

The Retreat was a cozy arbor house between the manor and the ferry.

"Was she alone, Selina?"

"Quite alone," was the reply.

Estelle flung herself from the veranda and hurried away. The octoroon followed at her heels. As the two women approached the spot, Estelle caught sight of a white dress, and, halting not, ran to the embowered door of the arbor. In another moment she recoiled with a cry, for before her stood the white mystery of Ravenswood.

There was no attempt at flight upon the part of the White Woman. She looked at the fair Virginian, and a smile seemed to cross her face.

In another second Estelle had seized her wrist and drawn her forward to where the moonlight was brightest, and was looking into the depths of her singular eyes.

"I have found you at last!" she exclaimed. "No harm shall come to you. You will go with us to the house and——"

A cry of aversion leaped from the White Woman's lips, but, heedless of this, Estelle escorted her away, and Selina, trembling not a little, fell into the path behind her.

There was a weird beauty about the face of the creature thus captured. She crossed the threshold with Estelle, and was taken to the parlor, where she turned slowly upon the heiress of Ravenswood and centered her with her eyes.

"You are safe here," Estelle said, in reassuring tones. "You are not a prisoner, but a guest."

For the first time the White Woman spoke.

"And why your guest?" she said, casting her eyes to the floor.

"The doors of Ravenswood are always open to good people," was the reply.

"To good people!" and a little laugh rippled over the White Woman's lips.

"You have been here before," continued Estelle.

"Yes."

"The other time was the night of the storm and the tragedy."

"You saw me that night?"

"Beside the oak near the house. The lightning revealed you to Sylvan and me."

"Who is Sylvan?"

"He is a dear friend who is not here now."

"Will he come back?"

"I trust he will."

The White Woman let her gaze rove around the room. It rested for a moment on the silent Selina, and she seemed to recall their meeting by the river.

"Shall I dismiss Selina?" asked Estelle, trying to read the thoughts of her captive.

"If you will, miss."

The octoroon needed no command, but stole from the room, and Estelle and the White Woman were alone.

"I have come to restore it," said the strange one, "but I would have preferred to have done so without detection."

As she ceased her hand disappeared in her bosom, and when it was withdrawn a cry came from Estelle.

"The Diamond Mouse!" she exclaimed. The little object which had been deposited on the table was really the Curse of Culloden, and the jewel in its forehead glittered as of old.

"So it was you who took it?" cried the heiress of the manor.

"Was it not in accordance with the old story?" smiled the other. "You have heard it many times, how a white woman always robs the possessors of the Diamond Mouse."

Estelle trembled in spite of herself.

"But you?" she cried, throwing the White Woman a penetrating look. "How are you connected with the legend?"

"Not now, not now!" was the answer. "You will let me depart, now that the Mouse has come home?"

"To be lost again with its attendant horrors?"

"Perhaps," sighed the listener.

"Nay, take it back!" exclaimed Estelle. "I do not begrudge you the possessing of the curse."

"Not for a thousand things like that," was the swift retort, as the speaker looked at the thing on the table. "Keep it, lady, and let me bid you good night."

She would have passed Estelle had not that person thrown out a hand and prevented.

"You know much," said she. "I believe the mysteries of that terrible night are in your hands. You shall not go till you have revealed them."

"And why have them known?" was the answer. "Will you not be happier if they remain wrapped in a cloud?"

"No!"

"Are you not happy now with all Ravenswood in your possession?"

Estelle's lips came together and grew white.

"I am not happy," said she, lowering her voice. "My life is now under the shadow of misfortune. From whence did you come?"

The suddenness of the question startled the White Woman.

"I am a bird that has escaped from its cage," she replied. "I am the White Woman of Graystone."

"The home of Doctor Gurth?"

"The house of black arts and crime," "I believe you have rightly named the place. Tell me something about that man."

The White Woman by a sudden wrench broke from Estelle's grasp and was at the door before the heiress could recover.

"Remain!" she cried, springing after her. "No harm can come to you here. I will defend you against the Black Doctor——"

"As ably as you are defending your-

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A MAN tried to sell me a horse once. He said it was a fine horse and had nothing the matter with it. I wanted a fine horse. But I didn't know anything about horses much. And I didn't know the man very well, either.

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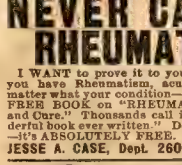

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self against him, no doubt," was the sarcastic rejoinder. "Look to yourself, miss, and let Vashti be the architect of her own fortunes."

The White Woman jerked the door open, and was in the broad hall lighted by a chandelier which had showered its gleams over more than one generation of Cheverlys.

"Think of all the evil arts you can, combine all the devilries in the world, and name them Saltus Gurth!"

"Is he that much a wretch?"

"Aye, and more than that."

"Then you shall not go!" cried Estelle. "I am in that man's power. I have been given to him by the will of the dead. I am to be torn from the one whom I had chosen, from Sylvan, destined to become the wife of the man whom you have named the veriest scoundrel in the world."

"And there is no escape," was the reply.

"None unless you open the door to safety."

The White Woman looked for a long minute into Estelle's face before she spoke again.

"I pity you, miss. From the depths of a heart which has been tried in the fires of fate I pity any one who falls into the power of Doctor Gurth of Graystone."

Amid the silence that came after these words Vashti opened the door which led to the grounds beyond the manor house and Estelle, thrilled by what she had heard, made no move. The White Woman vanished slowly and Estelle saw her gliding through the light that streamed from the hall. The next moment she stood in the red parlor, white-faced and breathless. Her eyes fell upon the Diamond Mouse on the table. With a cry she sprang forward and seized it.

"I wish I could hurl it to the ends of the earth!" rang from her throat. "Its possession is misfortune and death. No one shall ever rob me of it!"

She would have crushed it in her hand if she could, and while she gazed at it Selina stole into the room and watched her in silence.

CHAPTER XII.

THE VENOM OF THE TROPICS.

Sylvan in Richmond had not given over his hunt for Halco the dwarf. The fact of the little man's escape from him in the capital park, coupled with the story he had heard from the lips of the old man Halliday, one of the last witnesses to Lady Constance's will, still further convinced him that Halco held the secret by which he must solve the machinations of the Black Doctor. He was chagrined, but not without hope.

He was well aware that the dwarf would keep out of sight now that he was aware that the Cyclan was on his trail. Of the visit of Dragon to the city he knew nothing. Indeed, he never dreamed of such a thing, although he knew that Doctor Gurth would resort to every means to baffle his efforts.

At one time he thought of returning to the vicinity of Ravenswood and again confronting the Man of Graystone, but as time was now enough for this, he resolved to adhere to his original purpose and remain in Richmond. He had not come to the city for the purpose of finding Halco, but upon a different mission. Halliday had told him that the Black Doctor had once resided in the city, which merely confirmed a rumor which had already reached his ears, and this was what carried him from the Virginian manor.

On the very night when Estelle met with her adventure with the White Woman, Sylvan believed that he was on the verge of a clew to his old enemy. He accordingly visited a certain part of the city, and rapped on a door which stood between two narrow columns at the side of which was an oblong window. The portal was pulled ajar and the angular face of a strange woman greeted him. Sylvan pushed inside and turned to behold two inquisitive eyes intently regarding him.

"You are Mrs. Scotian?" queried Sylvan, returning the stare.

"What if I am?"

"That is answer enough," he answered.

"I know you not, sir. I do not receive strange visitors. In fact I live entirely alone."

"Yes?"

The woman's sententiousness repulsed Sylvan.

"I have come to make an inquiry," he went on, determined not to be thrown off his gaurd. "You are acquainted with Doctor Saltus Gurth?"

The demeanor of the woman instantly changed.

"Into this room," said she, opening a door alongside the hall, and when Estelle's lover had entered the small apartment she looked searchingly at him once more.

"What do you know about the Doctor?" she asked.

"Not so much as I would like," was the retort.

"Friend or foe to him?"

Sylvan, who was trying to analyze the woman's look, ventured out with some boldness,

"Foe," he said, and the face before him instantly cleared up.

"I like your frankness," she replied, with a smile. "We will fence no longer. I know Doctor Gurth."

"And but little good of him."

"None at all, curse the serpent's arts!"

Sylvan believed he was on the right track.

"Let us waive all preliminaries," said he. "There is no need of such things now. I am Sylvan Roche of this city. Doctor Gurth is playing a dark hand not far from here."

"He never played a fair one!" exclaimed Mrs. Scotian, as Sylvan paused.

"I can well believe you."

"What is the plot now?"

The young man thought he was justified in telling the story of the events that had taken place at Ravenswood, and while he did so he had an attentive listener. When he had concluded, the woman rose and crossed the room to a small cabinet which stood in one corner. He saw her unlock it with a key which she took from a pocket, and throw open a narrow door. She turned and came back to him with a few folded papers in her hands. Sitting down, she opened them one by one, and at length paused over the last one.

"I once wrote it all down," she resumed, looking up into his face with a glitter of triumph in her eyes. "Here, in brief, is the true history of that demon incarnate.

Sylvan held his breath for the next move on the woman's part.

"Do you want the history in a nutshell, or would you rather read for yourself? No? Well, three years in the galleys of France, two in an American prison, one year as a wolf in sheep's clothing as a minister and all his life as a charlatan!"

It seemed to give her fiendish pleasure in throwing out such startling information.

"He strikes in the dark, does this man of scoundrelism. There is not a bit of rascality with which he is not familiar. And so he is to wed that young girl around whom he has thrown his infamous coils?"

"Tell me all about him," cried Sylvan.

For the next ten minutes he listened to a story of chicanery which amazed him. Under other circumstances it would have appeared incredible.

"Now you have it all," finished the woman. "I am glad you have come to me. If you had not come, this secret might have died with Iris Scotian. Go back and fight this man with weapons which he does not dream you possess. You are now his equal. But beware! He is all powerful, like men who have lived a life of crime."

Estelle's lover rose and thanked the woman for what she had revealed. She refused the money which he thrust into her hand, and he turned away.

"Bring or send me good news some day," she said at parting. "I dare not strike this man openly. He seems to have a hundred eyes, and I have no doubt that the dwarf Halco is in league with him." She followed him to the door and held it open to say good night.

At last he was provided with a weapon with which he could fight the Black Doctor. The thought sent his blood swiftly through every vein. He saw Estelle saved from the power of the man of evil; he saw the clouds brushed from her sky, and nothing to interfere with his future happiness.

The cool wind which touched his cheeks as he went down the steps of the little house in Franklin street was a balm to his soul. New life had come. He could now go back and face Doctor Gurth on the threshold of his villainy. If the final battle was to be in the octagonal house, well and good. If beneath the roof of Graystone, he would not shirk the conflict. Anywhere, anywhere! he cared not where the final fray should be.

If he had looked back after quitting

(Continued on page fifteen.)

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"He Loves Me."

Stella—"Do you count whether he loves you with a daisy?"

Bella—"That's too uncertain. I use a three-leaved clover."

In Earnest.

He (delightedly)—"Have you really and truly never been engaged before?"

She—"Never; that is, not in the winter."

JERKED TO HER ARMS.

The Day of the Suffragette.

"Are you an instructed delegate?"

"I should say so!"

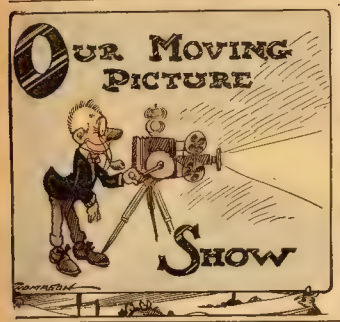
"How were you instructed?"

"By my wife before I left home."

Talk of the Tots.

Marjorie— We have acolytes in our church."

Little Mable—"That's nothing; we have 'lectric lights in ours."



Reuben—"Gosh, there's Cinthy over there. Wisht I wasn't so bashful, an I'd go over an—"

"By gum! What's the matter? One o' them airship anchors is flyin' with me.

"Look out, Cinthy—here I come—I can't help myself."

Cinthy—"Oh, Reuben! This is so sudden. I knew you'd come some time, though."

A Skeptical Dolly.

A little girl came to her father one day and said her dolly was very sick.

"Send for the doctor," suggested the father.

"I did, but he couldn't help her," said the child.

"Give her a drink of water," again suggested the father.

"I did, but she couldn't swallow it," said the child.

"Why," said the father, "I guess you will have to try Christian Science."

"I did" said the child, "but she couldn't swallow that, either."

A Deep Thinker.

The new teacher was somewhat uncertain as to the nationality of her latest charges. She was not kept long in doubt, however, "Yoke" she wrote on the board, then asked in the most musical tones, as she looked graciously round the class, "Can any little boy or girl tell me the meaning of that word?"

A small blond boy raised his hand. "Ay know," he said, hoarsely. "It—it ess when you say something funn'."

A Family Jar.

A man and wife were having a little family discussion. You know the kind "I didn't get much of a man when I married you," snarled the wife.

"Well, you wouldn't expect a high-class man to pick you out, would you?" was the gentleman's retort.

And then the furniture began to fly.

A Guest's Blunder.

"Well, thank Heaven," he said, approaching a sad looking man who sat back in a dark corner, "that's over with."

"What is?"

"I've danced with the hostess Have you gone through with it yet?"

"No; I don't need to. I'm the host."

A Friendly Warning.

Floating Shade—"Who are you?"

Beautiful Spirit—"I am the angel of peace, and am flying back to earth."

Floating Shade—"Well if you stay overnight in Europe, you'd better roost high."

Very Slow Traveling.

Passenger (on slow train)—"What are we stopping here for?"

Conductor—"Got a hot box."

Passenger—"Huh! Some tramp must have built a fire under it."

When in Doubt.

"Dear me," sighed the June bride, "I wish I knew what to get for Harry's supper tonight!"

"Don't you?" asked Mrs. Longtimer.

"I've thought and thought, and can't think of anything he'd like this hot weather."

"I'll tell you, then. When in doubt serve him cold boiled ham. That's what I always do."

Fits the Text.

"Johnnie," asks the teacher, "what do you think may be meant by the text, 'Unto him that hath shall be given, while from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath?'"

"That's Bill says it means fat, teacher," answers Johnnie. "He says fat folks keeps a-gettin' fatter an' thin ones keeps a-gettin' thinner, in spite of all they do."
—Judge's Library.

No Obstacle.

Mother—"I really think you'd be happier if you married a man who has less money."

Daughter—"Don't worry, mother; he will have less in a very short time."

The Duke's Confession.

"Daughter, has the duke told you the old, old story as yet?"

"Yes, mother. He says he owes about two hundred thousand plunks."

A Thore.

Mistress—"So you've decided to remain with me, Mary."

Maid—"Yes'm. A lady friend said I'd better stay. She said I was to look upon you as my thorn and bear it."

Strange Chance.

Citizen—"What in creation will I do for a shirt?"

Wife—"Didn't the washerwoman send any?"

Citizen—"Yes, a dozen; but none of them fit me."

The Way It Sounded.

"Does you wife still have her French maid?"

"No, she makes it herself."

Patient Experiment.

"What are you going to call that mule of yours, uncle?"

"Well, suh," answered the driver of the animal, "I ain't made up my mind. I's tried all de names I could think of, an' I's gwineter keep on huntin' mo'. If I ever finds one he pays any 'tention to, da's whut I's gwineter call 'im."

Made Him Nervous.

Bystander—"Don't you feel terribly nervous when you are way up in the air?"

Aviator—"Yes, if there's a small crowd."

"What difference does the crowd make?"

"I'm afraid I won't get my salary."

No Immediate Hurry.

A North Dakota farmer roused his new harvest hand from slumber in the haymow promptly at 3 a. m.

"You can slip down and cut that little patch of oats before breakfast," he ordered.

"Are they wild oats?" sleepily inquired the hired man.

"Wild? Why no, they're tame oats."

"Well, if they're tame, maybe I can slip up on them in daylight."

Same Old Story.

News Editor—"Here's a dispatch from Swampton, saying a citizen was murdered, and asking if we want particulars."

Managing Editor—"No. Just add that the people are scouring the country for the murderers, and if caught they will probably be lynched by the infuriated populace. That's all the particulars there ever are in such cases."

Chance for Heroism.

Adorer (anxiously)—"What did your father say?"

Sweet Girl—"Oh, he got so angry I was afraid to stay and listen. He's in a perfectly terrible rage. Go in and appease him."

Where People Stay Alive.

Jerseyman—"Monmouth County has several voters over a hundred years old."

Stranger—"Well! Well! Not many railroad crossings at grade there, I presume."

Better Than Nothing.

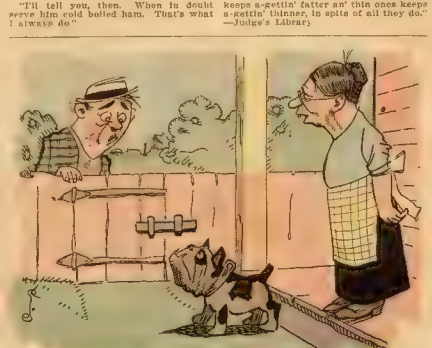
Servant—"Please, sir, the coal is all out."

Mr. Wearie—"Well, here's a big pile of dunning letters for that last ton. Burn them."

Limitations Admitted.

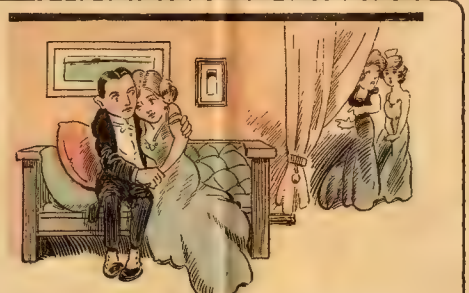
"You don't figure on the possibilities of political changes as you used to."

"No," replied the old time expert. "I'm a pretty good prophet. But I'm no lightning calculator."



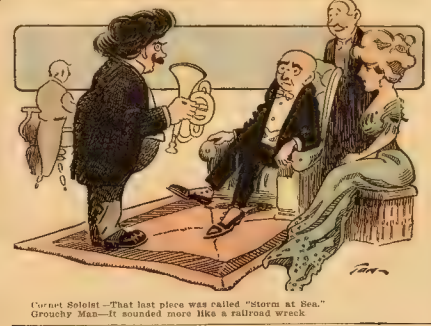
Pilgrim—If I come in will that dorg bite me?

Mrs. Hawkins—We ain't no ways sure, mister. But the feller that let us take him on trial said he'd chaw up a tramp in less'n two minutes, but, land sakes, we ain't goin' to believe it till we see it done.



Mrs. Primme—Can that be Miss Yellowleaf with her face buried in young Mr. Featherton's coat collar?

Miss Pickles—Impossible! You can't expect old heads on young shoulders.



Cornet Soloist—That last piece was called "Storm at Sea."

Grouchy Man—It sounded more like a railroad wreck.

To Gratify the Cook.

Clerk—"Your ad reads 'Plain cook wanted.' They rather fight shy of that, sir."

Subbubs—"How shall I put it, then?"

Clerk—"I should say 'Woman wanted to do plain cooking.'"

Subbubs—"Change it, will you? Glad you mentioned it. And by the way, instead of 'woman' you'd better make it 'lady.'"

Cheap Music.

Fair Customer—"Have you a piece called the 'Moonlight Sonata?'"

Clerk—"Yes, madam—'Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata.' Here it is."

"What's the price?"

"Only twenty cents."

"Oh, that's too cheap. Show me something better."

Unselfish.

Sweet Girl—"Is your love for me absolutely unselfish?"

Adorer—"Absolutely."

Sweet Girl—"Then I wish you'd go somewhere else tonight. Jack Hanson promised to call."

Slow Fellow.

"Have you really broken your engagement with him?" asked the first giddy girl.

"Yes," replied the other. "He was no fun at all. I simply couldn't make him jealous, no matter how I tried."

His Standing.

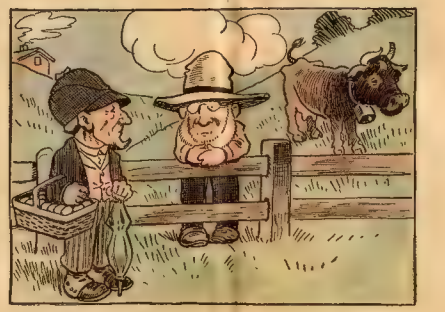
"That young fellow seems to have made himself solid at your house."

"Yes; I judge he has. Ma is looking up his family, while pa is investigating his commercial rating."

Never Changed His.

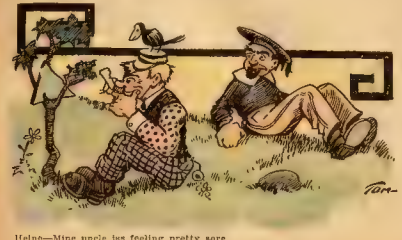
Mrs. Styles—"Why, John! See how gray your hair is, and how black mine is!"

Mr. Styles—"Well, dear, you know I've worn mine more than you have."



Hank Hawkins—Say, Bud, lemme ast ye suthin'. Did yew hear Josh Medder-grass a-talkin' about me behind my back?

Bud Bingswat—Waal, no; but he was a-talkin' about yew behind his barn.



Heine—Mine uncle iss feeling pretty sore.

Losey—Vich uncle?

Heine—Carbuncle.

Imagination Required.

Bilkins—"Your friend Scribbler seems to be always short of funds, if his books don't sell, why don't you try him at office work when you need a new man?"

Boomer—"No use. A man who can't succeed as a novelist hasn't imagination enough for the real estate business."

For Floppers.

"Who is the proud and prosperous looking person?"

"That is Bumbrough, who sold a patent for half a million."

"Some patent, eh?"

"Yes, it was a reversible campaign button with pictures of both candidates."

A Trifle Too Good.

Friend—"Got that new patent pneumatic sulky of yours done?"

Inventor—"All complete now. There is only one trouble."

"What's that?"

"It keeps getting ahead of the horse."

A Traveler's Tale.

"Is it true, Mr. Romer, that you were once captured by cannibals?"

"Yes. I was on the bill of fare for a wedding banquet."

"Mercy! How did you escape?"

"Oh, the bride broke the engagement."

The Hard Part.

"Did you make a success of keeping chickens?"

"To a certain extent. Where I fell down was in trying to sell them or persuade them to lay eggs."

Anything.

"Drinking anything?" asked Colder inquisitively.

"Anything," said Cohan, positively.

In Hard Luck.

Architect's Wife—"You look distressed. What's happened?"

Architect (despondently)—"I've just found out that Mr. Shortcash hasn't credit enough to make his new house a credit to me."

"What are you bringing the alarm clock for, Elsa?"

"Oh, mamma said your foot has gone to sleep!

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Belated Appreciation.

A workman called at the home of President Taft's brother Charlie in Cincinnati to perform some odd job, and he paused to note some of the priceless paintings in Brother Charlie's private gallery. He was attracted to a small original Van Dyke and moved up closer to get a better look.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "I've got that same thing down home. Yes, it's exactly like that. My wife got it some place here in town. Are they worth much?"

"That one is worth $35,000," he was told.

"H'm!" he murmured. "I guess I'll have ours framed."

Special Announcement

The United States is prosperous, more prosperous than ever before in its history. This is the statement of the Commercial Agencies. The Ledger and Blade are going to emphasize this prosperity by an especially big issue of both papers next week. There will be more pages and numerous special features. Don't fail to get them if you would like to have a big treat.

THE MANAGEMENT.

ENLIGHTENING FATHER.

MRS. BONESTEEL leaned forward and spoke in a low and impressive voice:

"Henry," she said, "I'm afraid that young man wants to marry Mabel!"

"Huh?" exclaimed her husband. He dropped his paper, stared a minute and then picked it up and shook it out fiercely. "Nonsense!" he finished shortly.

"No nonsense about it!" declared his wife. "I guess I know the symptoms! Men are so blind! Why, he calls four nights a week and he phones her every day, and as for flowers! And candy!"

Bonesteel snorted. "You make me tired, Araminta," he told his wife. "Just because the boys flock around Mabel you think they all want to marry her! Why, she's not thinking of marrying for years and years! She's only twenty! It's absurd! Anyhow, that young jackanapes probably doesn't earn enough to buy salt for potatoes. He'll have more sense——"

"That's the very kind," said Mrs. Bonesteel distinctly, "that elope—and then they come home and weep on your front doorstep and you take them in! I don't want that kind of a son-in-law! I'm not looking for a millionaire, but I want Mabel to marry a smart business man—and I don't like the way young Ferguson looks at her! Girls are so impressionable! It seems to me that you'd better let me take her away on a trip!"

"Araminta," said Mr. Bonesteel in awful tones, "do you mean to say that you fear our combined intellects and Mabel's natural good sense are not a match for all the absurd and ridiculous puppy love tales that young Ferguson can tell her?"

"I mean just that," said his wife, decidedly. "It's got to be stopped!"

"Fiddlesticks!" snapped Mabel's father. "Why, I sent bushels of flowers to all sorts of girls and didn't marry 'em at all! It's no sign——"

"I got a few flowers myself," said Mrs. Bonesteel, "and I know how the young men acted who went with the flowers! I didn't actually have to grab you when you came along, Henry Bonesteel, let me tell you! There were others! What I'm afraid of is that Mabel won't wait for the right Henry. She may take a notion she's in love with this one!"

"Mabel would never like him," said her father, decidedly. "She's too smart. She's just amusing herself. They all like to dally that way. Girls will be girls——"

"That's just it," interrupted his wife. "They will be foolish and crazy and spoil their lives if their parents——"

"What would you like to have me do?" inquired Mr. Bonesteel, politely. "Would you advise my walking down into the parlor and saying, 'Excuse me, sir, but if your intentions are serious, allow me to kick you off the front porch, because I don't like the style of your nose?' That would signify my desire to protect my daughter from his unwelcome attentions. I——"

"Don't be silly," said his wife. "I believe you really like young Ferguson!"

"I am a fair-minded man," said Bonesteel, "and personally I have nothing against Mr. Ferguson, nothing! I don't few calls from him if she chooses! She isn't going to marry him, let me tell you! I'm not afraid, not a bit! You are a hysterical woman, Araminta, and you can't judge things at their proper values at all. Not at all!"

"Very well!" said his wife. "You'll see! And don't say I didn't tell you! I don't see how he can arrange to pay rent for a decent flat. I suppose we could give them the two front rooms here!"

"Bosh!" said Bonesteel. "Why don't you be calm and sensible the way I am see why Mabel shouldn't enjoy a few flowers and a little candy and endure a

"She's just amusing herself."

and stop worrying? There's nothing to worry about! Not a thing! Oh-er-hello, Mabel! Caller gone?"

"Yes," said Mabel, who had just come upstairs.

She was very pink as to cheeks and bright as to eye. In her fingers she twisted a rose. Looking at it she smiled faintly. The she regarded herself in the mirror in a faraway manner and touched up her hair.

"Did you ever notice," she inquired generally, "the way he lifts his head when he is pleased?"

"No," said her father, "I can't exactly say I ever did!" He coughed, glared at his wife and strangled. He eyed his daughter as though she were a new and dangerous specimen just dug up that he had never seen before.

"By the way, Mabel—what do you say to taking a trip East with your mother for the spring? Shopping and theaters and Atlantic City—I was just thinking you needed a change!"

"A-a-hem!" sniffed Mrs. Bonesteel. "Please pass me that spool of thread, Henry!"

Geographical Strike.

"Some people has all de luck. Take dat ole Miss. Ida., fer example; Kas., if it warn't fer luck, she Nebr. would Mont. to nuffin. And, now, La., she sure has Ariz., in de world sence she took in the neighbors' Wash. It jes nachely makes me Ill., and I ses to Minn., 'O., Wyo., why can't I Nev., have no luck? Iowa lot o' money, and I suttenly Wis. I could have a streak come jes once without encounterin' some Fla. to knock everything R. I.

"Tell 'bout dat ole woman's luck? Why, sure! She was out back o' her pig Penn. one day, a lumberin' along like a Ark. in a little kind of a Del. out dere, when suddenly she stumbles over sumpin. She looks down N. C.'s a big Mass. o' Ore. Dat's what you mought Colo. Tenn. strike, ain't it, for dere was a lot Mo. whar that come from, and dey say dere ain't no Ind. o' it. N. Y. couldn't I have found it? U. needn't Cal, dis no Conn. either; take it from Me."—Judge.

Tactful Willie.

Subbubs had taken Chumpleigh home to dine. Everything went well until they were seated at the dinner table, when Willie Subbubs remarked: "Why, pa, this is roas' beef."

"Well," said his father, "what of it?"

"Why, I heard you tell ma at breakfast that you were going to bring a muttonhead home for dinner this evening."

In Stormy Weather, Too.

"Come, my son," said the stern but fond parent, as he tore a shingle from the roof of the henhouse and strode in the direction of the woodshed, "let us take a little trip."

"What kind of a trip?" nervously asked the dutiful son.

"Oh, we will go on a short whaling trip."—Judge.

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The Diamond Mouse.

(Continued from page eleven.)

ting the house he might have seen a dark figure gliding after him with the cunning of an Italian bravo. There was no sound from beneath the feet of his shadow. Sylvan, light-hearted, kept on, thinking only of the weapons which had been placed in his hands. Not until he had advanced some squares from the woman's house did he realize that he was not the only one abroad in that locality. A man sidled up to him so noiselessly that he was unaware of his presence until something brushed his elbow. At the same moment his hand felt a sharp pain which went through him like a needle. He turned halfway around, and confronted a pair of eyes the glitter of which he never forgot. Was it accident or design?

The dark figure flitted past him. Sylvan the next moment got into the light of a street lamp and glanced at his hand. There was no wound, but the sting remained. All at once he thought of what Halliday had said. Considine, the other witness to Lady Constance's will had said that something had stung him in his sleep.

The strange man was already gone. A singular dizziness began to take possession of Sylvan. The lamps of the thoroughfare were dancing like dervishes. His eyes were already blurred. Not only this, but something seemed to be gripping his heart with fingers of ice. His limbs were giving away beneath him. He tried to cry out, but his effort emitted no sound. He threw up his hands to maintain his equilibrium, but they fell lifeless at his side. Was it death? And the man who had passed him and the sudden pain in his hand!

When he came back to consciousness he was no longer in the street. A soft light which pained his eyes came in at a window. He was lying on a cot, and his surroundings looked familiar. He was in his own lodgings.

Presently a door opened and a young woman glided forward. It was Julia, the daughter of his landlady. Sylvan put out his hand.

"You are better?" said the girl, with a pleased smile. "This will be good news for Doctor Dorsey. He said he came to you in the nick of time, night before last."

Night before last! The words sent a chill through every fiber of Sylvan's being. It all came back to him once more—the visit to Mrs. Scotlan's house, the man on the street, and the sudden pain.

"What was it, Julia?" he asked.

"The poison of Guiana, the Doctor says. He spent five years in the tropics where the galley slaves are confined," and Sylvan, with another look, closed his eyes.

The continuation of this interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year and we have stories awaiting publication that you cannot afford to miss.

In No Danger.

Amateur Sportsman (in the Maine woods)—"Aw—I 'say, mah man, are bears vewy dangerous?"

Guide—"You needn't fear, sir. Bears don't never turn on a man until they've been hit, an' you'd most likely miss em."

HARD TO SEE

Even When the Facts About Coffee are Plain.

It is curious how people will refuse to believe what one can clearly see.

Tell the average man or woman that the slow but cumulative poisonous effect of caffeine—the alkaloid in tea and coffee—tends to weaken the heart, upset the nervous system and cause indigestion, and they may laugh at you if they don't know the facts.

Prove it by science or by practical demonstration in the recovery of coffee drinkers from the above conditions, and a large per cent of the human family will shrug their shoulders, take some drugs and—keep on drinking coffee or tea.

"Coffee never agreed with me nor with several members of our household," writes a lady. "It enervates, depresses and creates a feeling of languor and heaviness. It was only by leaving off coffee and using Postum that we discovered the cause and way out of these ills.

"The only reason, I am sure, why Postum is not used altogether to the exclusion of ordinary coffee is, many persons do not know and do not seem willing to learn the facts and how to prepare this nutritious beverage. There's only one way—according to directions—boil it fully 15 minutes. Then it is delicious." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

The President's Daughter

(Continued from page three.)

they was even more afraid of losin' a good berth."

"I—I've felt for a long time that Mr. Markley is a—a very wicked man," murmured the girl.

"Huh!" grunted Jerry, savagely. He's worse than that; but, Miss Jessie, you don't know the words that says it."

Then he turned to his companion, with the reminder: "You forgot to tell her, Bill, that Mr. Benton was hurted."

She was out of the chair in an instant, and stood palpitating before them, her breath coming in gasps.

The conclusion of this remarkable story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year, and we have stories awaiting publication that you cannot afford to miss.

The Master Craft.

(Continued from page six.)

he subsided, for he was being introduced as an old friend to the Secretary.

"He is a designer, papa," the girl explained, coolly.

"He looks it!" chuckled the man in the launch. "He looks like a designer—against hearts—instead of master crafts."

Allison blushed. "They are both master crafts," he said, slowly, and the hand in his was warmer than the steel of the other master craft.

A STUPID FELLOW.

I went to kindergarten once;
The teacher said I was a dunce.
I took two weeks to learn one letter.
The other children did much better.

Eight grammar grades I floundered through
With work I was compelled to do.
In every room the way I acted
Would drive the teacher quite distracted.

I went through last year high school twice
And thought that I was pretty nice.
I used my spare time in persuading
The teachers to advance my grading.

I never liked to do much work,
And if a chance came I would shirk,
But now that I am through with college
I find I haven't gained much knowledge.

Harold—"Did you have anything up on the football game?"

Howard—"Yes. That's why I'm so down."

Too Wise for That.

The Army and Navy Club in Washington is an exclusive organization. The clubhouse is nicely decorated. One picture is a rather crude pen-and-ink drawing. It depicts an officer seated before a deal table, standing in front of which is a private soldier at salute. Beneath the picture is the inscription:

"Pat, I hear you have been drunk again."

"Yis, sor."

"Your conduct is disgraceful. Why can't you drink like officers and gentlemen?"

"Faith, sor, and if Oi did Oi'd be dead in a wake."

Pat and "Cat."

'Twas in the good old days, when the "cat" was used freely.

Scene—Quarterdeck of H. M. S. Hardship.

Pat Murphy and Jock McLean had been breaking leave and had been ordered to receive ten strokes each of the "cat." When the time came for their punishment, the captain, considering their previous good character, said that if they wished to wear anything to protect their backs a little they could do so.

The Scotchman replied that he would like to have a strip of canvas on his back. The request was granted, and then Pat, on being asked what he would like, exclaimed, "Shure, sor, if it's all the same to you, I would like to have the Scotchman on my back."

This is a small picture of my Art Upright Parlor Piano style 40—a magnificent instrument in genuine San Domingo Mahogany Cabinet—Ivory Keys—Copper Overstrung Strings in the Bass—Empire Grand Top—a piano which I'll place aside any $500 piano you can buy in your vicinity. This one and all other Thiery Pianos are shown in my Style Book in full-page pictures

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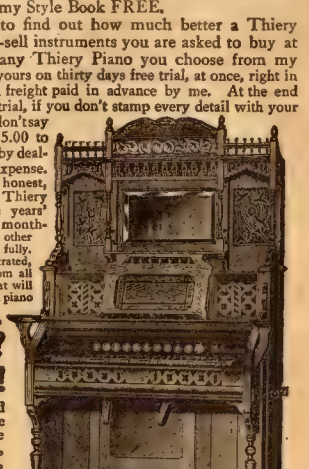

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ANECDOTES OF PEOPLE

Carefully Weighed.

In the Dana days on the New York Sun a young Cornell graduate was put at work reviewing books. One of the first books handed him was a massive "Life of Napoleon," by a college professor.

The Cornell man had specialized on Napoleon at his university under a great authority, and thought rather poorly of this new biographer of Napoleon—who was a professor in another university, by the way. He glanced casually over the illustrations and wrote his review as follows:

"'Life of Napoleon,' by Professor Soand-So. This work weighs nine pounds."

Mr. Dana read the review and sent for the young man.

"Did you write this review?" he growled.

"Yes, sir."

"Did you read the book?" growled Mr. Dana again, fiercer than before.

"No, sir; I weighed it."

"That'll do!" growled Mr. Dana again. Then he sent word down to the cashier to raise the reviewer's salary.

Women Like Praise.

Jack—"I'll tell you what's the matter, George. You don't praise your wife enough. Even if things don't go right, there's no use growling. Praise her efforts to please, whether they are successful or not. Women like praise, and lots of it."

George—"All right, I'll remember it."

George (at dinner, same day)—"My dear, this pie is just lovely! It's delicious: Ever so much better than those my mother used to make. She couldn't equal this pie if she tried a month."

George's Wife—"Huh! You've made fun of every pie I ever made, and now——"

George—"But this is lovely."

George's Wife—"That came from the baker's."

Two Smart Women.

Mother (anxiously)—"I am told that your husband plays poker every night at the club—plays for money, too."

Married Daughter—"That's all right. He gives me all his winnings——"

"What? Do you——"

"And he always plays with Mr. Nevdoor."

"What difference can that make?"

"Mrs. Nexdoor makes her husband give her his winnings, too, and then she gives the money to me, and I hand her what my husband won from hers, and so we both have about twice as much money as we could get out of them ourselves."

How He Loved Her.

Clara—"Did you bring it?"

Mr. Slimpurse—"Yes, my love, but I heard a terrible story at the jeweler's, my angel. A wild-eyed, dark-skinned man is roaming through this country hunting for a sacred jewel which was stolen from an Asiatic tribe by an American tourist, and the half-crazed fanatic will wade through blood to get it."

Clara—"Horrors!"

Mr. Slimpurse—"Yes, my sweet, and so, to avoid all risk, I brought you a plain gold ring."

How They Grow.

Old Friend—"Well, I declare, old boy, your wife is fully as tall as you are."

Mr. De Meek (in a whisper)—"Y-e-s, I guess that's so."

"How came you to marry such a big woman?"

"Well—er—she didn't seem so big before marriage."

A Great Success.

Clara—"Isn't it perfectly lovely—this higher education of woman?"

Dora—"Why?"

Clara—"The paper says eighty per cent of the Vassar College graduates get married."

Literary Man's Experience.

Henley—"How are you getting on with your writing for the magazines?"

Penley—"Just holding my own. They send me back as much as I send them."

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A Woman's Worries.

"A mother has worries that a man knows nothing about."

"How now?"

"I have just learned that my wife has been watching our boy for years to see that he carried his school books under his right arm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and under his left arm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. If he did not do this he might get curvature of the spine."

They Must Be There Now.

Bill—"The common variety of bee known as the honeybee, is thought by some authorities to have had its original home among the woods and mountains of central Europe."

Jim—"Well, from what I hear a person always could get stung good over there."

Hit His Soft Spot.

Magistrate O'Googhan—"Hovn't you been before me before?"

Astute Prisoner—"No, y'r honor; I never saw but one face that looked like yours, an' that was a photograph of an Irish king."

Magistrate O'Googhan—"Discharged! Call th' nixt case."

His Usual Fate.

Getthere—"Did you ever attend any of Miss Budd's 'at homes'?"

De Bore (sadly)—"No-o, but I've attended a good many of her 'not at homes'."

WHY, OH! WHY?

Although it never felt a blow,
The window has a pane,
And no one ever seems to know
What makes the weather yane.

Losing a King.

One of our naval officers tells of an incident that occurred when an American war-vessel was lying at anchor in a European port, on which occasion it was visited by a monarch with his suite.

One of the members of this suite, resplendent in gold lace and decorations, with a big sword at his side and sporting a huge mustache, was exploring the ship, being ignorant of things nautical, had leaned against the main-hatch windsail, mistaking it for a mast. Of what ensued the officer of the deck was informed by the boatswain's mate, who had seen the catastrophe and who broke the news of it thus:

"You'll excuse me, sir, but I think one of them kings has fell down the main-hatch, sir."

Out of an Engagement.

Tramp—"Please, mum, would ye mind hepin' a reduced professional gentleman wot can't get engagements this time o' year?"

Farmer's Wife—"Huh! Professional gentleman, are you?"

Tramp—"Yes, mum. I'm a professional scarecrow, mum."

A Talented Man.

Junior Partner—"I see you have engaged a new clerk. Is he a good salesman?"

Senior Partner—"Good salesman? Great snakes! I had to send for the police to prevent him from talking me into taking him into the firm."

The Bright Side.

After the Ways and Means Committee had been compelled to leave it old quarters and go over to a new House of Representatives office building some of his friends were sympathizing with Champ Clark.

"Well, it might have been worse, Champ," they said. "Cheer up. Pretty soon they will have the electric cars running in the subway and then you can ride over."

"Yes," replied Clark. "It might have been worse. Reminds me of an Irishman I knew down in St. Louis who had both of his legs cut off by a railroad train. 'It might have been worse, Mike,' they said.

"'Sure,' Mike replied; 'suppose I had been a chorus girl.'"

Other Vocations.

"How many graduated from Yellyard this June?"

"Five hundred and ten."

"All going into professional baseball, I s'pose?"

"Not at all," retorted the dean, peevishly. "That sort of talk is becoming offensive. We have two men who expect to be doctors and one man who is going into his father's hardware store."

Unwelcome Guest.

A young merchant called his home and said to the maid who answered the telephone:

"Tell Mrs. H. I am bringing spaghetti home for lunch."

The maid replied:

"All right, but it's nearly noon and we haven't much of anything cooked. Couldn't you take him to a restaurant downtown?"

A Trifle Strained.

"I believe in encouraging convicts to be polite, but it was rather embarrassing for the Governor when he lately visited a prison, the way a convict answered when he did not hear what the Governor was saying."

"What did he say?"

"He said, 'Pardon me.'"

Of No Practical Benefit.

"You don't seem to regret the fact that a number of people speak unkindly of you."

"No," replied Senator Sorghum; "the only kind words that ever secure unanimous indorsement are those that compose an epitaph."

When He Removes His Wig.

Gibbs—"In a way, I've as much as John D."

Dibbs—"Nonsense! Why, Rockefeller has a dollar for every hair on your head."

Gibbs—"Well, I'll bet I've a dollar for every hair on his head."

Like an Angel.

Impecunious Lover—"Be mine, Amanda, and you will be treated like an angel."

Wealthy Maiden—"Yes, I suppose so. Nothing to eat and less to wear. No, thank you."

Not Acquainted.

Mrs. Dashaway—"How long had you known your husband before you were married?"

Mrs. Gnaggs—"I didn't know him at all, I only thought I did."

To Develop the Bust

To Beauty Editor: I am so ashamed of my thin bust that I want to ask you if there is any harmless way to develop it. My hips and the rest of my body are right for the present styles and I do not want them any larger, but my bust is so flat that I would try anything that gave hope of even three or four more inches development. MARY S.

The only thing I know of that will develop the bust without increasing the size of the hips, or without putting on flesh where not needed, is a prescription put up by The Dr. Kelly Co., especially for small and undeveloped breasts. It is the discovery of a woman physician whose practice was largely among her own sex and in most cases increases the bust measure four to six inches in a month. Send 10c to the Dr. Kelly Co., Dept. 92 J B, Buffalo, N. Y., and they will send you a trial package of the treatment without charge. This is said to be of great value in cases of arrested development of the bust and will give a full, beautiful form without anyone knowing that the treatment was used.

Many mothers have told me that after the baby had been weaned, the breasts became flabby and shrunken, but the use of Dr. Kelly's prescription made them full and firm. Do not use pads or bust forms, as they never look natural and have a bad effect upon the general health. Neither would I recommend ordinary flesh builders or tonics, as they increase the hips and limbs and with the present styles the form should be slender everywhere except a generously developed bust. —Advertisement

J. P.

Those suffering from weakness and lack of vigor should take JUVEN PILLS. One box will tell a story of marvelous results. This medicine has more rejuvenating, vitalizing force than has ever before been offered. Sent postpaid only on receipt of this advertisement and $1. Made by its originators, C. I. HOOD Co., proprietors Hood's Sarsaparilla, LOWELL, MASS. (Z) —Advertisement

LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and roseleaf tint to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years, and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very, small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 401, Blairsville, Pa. —Advertisement

$5 WHISKEY FOR ONLY 12C.

Because of a fight which the Mail Order Whiskey Trust is making on him, M. Marcel of 930 Marcel Bldg., Kansas City, Mo., has published a book in which he prints the trade formula of the Trust and exposes its secrets, showing that the whiskey they sell for from $3 to $5 per gallon costs only 10c to 12c to make. He sends the book free to all who write for it. —Advertisement

Advertisement. Advertisement. Advertisement.

What a Change at Washington Would Mean To The American Farmer

TO begin with, the farmer isn't a weather-vane.

He finds out what is wise and good —and he *sticks* to it.

That's *what makes him a successful farmer* —because he decides upon a plan of farming that is definite, profitable and right.

And he adopts it *permanently*.

He's not to be turned aside by passing fancies or unproved theories

He wisely looks at the bread-and-butter side of things.

And if the bread is sweet, the butter is rich and thick—he is not pining for a "change."

Practically in every part of the country, farmers are now rejoicing over bumper crops.

Nature has been mighty good to them this year.

Their granaries are fat—their bins distended.

But that *alone* isn't their chief cause for rejoicing.

* * *

Big crops—enormous yields—are simply *assets* waiting to be *cashed*.

And it's the *cashing* that interests the farmer.

That's where he is doubly blessed this year. For the *values* of farm products are up and soaring.

Think of the astounding farm wealth production—nearly *nine* billion dollars for 1912!

—Conservatively estimated by the U. S. Agricultural Department.

Then remember back to 1900 when the total figures were something over *four* billion.

And note, please, that this percentage of increase is vastly in excess of the increased acreage brought under cultivation during that period.

Is it any wonder that the farmer is sitting tight and contented?

And is it likely that he will consider risking his present bountiful Prosperity—turning his back upon Plenty—

And taking a step in the dark!

* * *

Land values have doubled within the last ten years.

Intelligent Government assistance—representing an enormous investment on Uncle Sam's part—has led to better use of the soil.

But, most of all the farmer has made more money on his crops, because of a thriving home market—right at his door.

You know that commercial and agricultural prosperity link close together.

When the smoke is coming from every factory chimney, when every wheel is turning, when labor troubles are reduced to a minimum, when contented workmen in mills from Maine to the Pacific Coast are bringing home well-filled pay envelopes every Saturday night—

—*The farmer is going to get his big liberal share.*

We have people enough, with appetites enough, and money enough, to consume practically every bushel of grain, or vegetable product, and every pound of beef, pork or mutton the farmer produces.

And the demand is at hand. It's a short haul.

Every mile consumed in shipping farm products from one country to another means that much delay and that much money loss to the producer.

* * *

But the export problem sends no cloud across the farmer's sunshiny horizon these days.

Figures are dull, but there is a mighty keen edge to these that show the actual exports of the three leading grain crops, according to the latest available figures. They are official.

In the last year, out of the total production of corn in America, a little over 2 per cent was shipped abroad; of oats less than 1 per cent; of wheat 4 per cent.

Just remember *that* when someone quotes to you the bit of Democratic doctrine, taken from the party's 1912 platform, which reads:

"The farmer sells largely in the free market"—meaning the foreign markets of the world.

* * *

Now let's get back to the *cause* of this Prosperity.

A mighty large percent of it is due to the wise and consistent Tariff policies of President Taft.

The Republican Party has stood first, last and all the time, for the home market.

Mr. Taft's broad-gauge policies mean the protection and development of the National Home Market.

His sane, judicial methods have inspired industrial confidence.

It was known, that whatever Taft did would be calm, dispassionate, reasonable—for the best good of the entire population—that it would build up rather than overthrow.

* * *

Men at the head of things—while they realize that Taft is an enemy to Monopoly—that he has 45 indictments against trusts to his credit in three years of administration, compared with 25 indictments during the first and second terms of his predecessor—

—Still recognize in him and his policies the *real* safety and *continued* Prosperity of the country.

That is, to a great extent, why all the mills, factories, are running full time, why wages are high—

—Why the farmer's home market today awaits his most bountiful crops.

* * *

Mr. Taft is an exponent of simple Americanism.

Not a sensationalist of stage-acting methods.

Not an impractical dreamer with his head in the clouds.

Taft did a heretofore unheard-of thing when he appointed a non-partisan tariff board.

—When he fought for three years for the permanent establishment of this Commission.

—When he absolutely refused to "play politics," but chose the competent men to make this extensive investigation, and set them at work, at home and abroad to *find out* what conditions were—to glean the absolute facts on which an equitable tariff revision could be founded.

One that would be just, alike to the producer, the manufacturer and the consumer.

And remember that this represents the *first* and only move to regulate the tariff on a truly scientific basis.

Taft has this record of performance. Other candidates have none.

His *actions* are more eloquent than the *words* of his opponents.

* * *

He stood firmly against the Democratic wool bill because it was notoriously defective in vital essentials, and its passage was utterly inexcusable.

The Tariff Board's report was in and the long-looked for downward revision of that Schedule based upon facts instead of theories, was offered by the Republicans and voted down by Democrats who had made no effort to ascertain what damage they were inflicting upon American farmers, woolcombers and manufacturers.

Under the *ad valorem* method of levying the duties provided by the Democrats, importers would have defrauded the Government, and American sheep owners would have failed to receive the protection ostensibly extended.

The Republican bill eliminated all excess protection, reformed the entire Schedule on the scientific basis of levying a specific duty upon the scoured pound of wool and would have corrected the admitted evils of the Schedule without "killing the patient."

The President therefore awaits patiently the judgment of the American people as to his action.

* * *

Another case was the Free Sugar Bill.

If Mr. Taft had supported this bill it would have spelled certain trouble for the thousands of farmers raising Sugar Beets in Michigan, Colorado, Nebraska and other States, and to raisers of Sugar Cane in the South.

President Taft opposed it—and these important home industries were protected and preserved.

* * *

That is the *real Taft*.

An optimist—a worker—a just judge.

A man who plays the game fair—who puts right above politics, and the people's prosperity above personal glory.

Under his administration times have grown better and better.

The outlook is for still brighter things.

We don't believe that there's a single thinking farmer reader of this paper, who—when he gives real consideration to the men and to the issues—will vote to bring about a "change."

REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE
Charles D. Hilles, Chairman,
James B. Reynolds, Secretary.

Chicago Ledger

Entered as second-class matter June 25, 1885, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879

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Back numbers of the Ledger can be had by addressing this office. Always give the numbers desired, plainly written, accompanied by your full address, and your order will receive prompt attention. Price 5 cents per copy.

BEWARE OF STRANGERS.

The Ledger employs no traveling agents to solicit subscriptions, and every person working in that capacity is a fraud. No person is authorized to take subscriptions for the Ledger unless he or she be well known in the city or village where they have been appointed agents to sell this paper every week. A liberal reward will be paid for evidence that will enable us to arrest and convict such persons as are now traveling from town to town in different sections of this county, claiming to be agents of the Ledger and thereby defrauding the people. Beware of strangers

ADVERTISING.

Advertising rate $2 25 per Agate Line, per insertion for advertisements in the The Chicago Ledger and The Saturday Blade combined. These two weeklies have an average circulation of

1,000,000

COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS.

It's easy to believe as you hope.

Some men are too slow to win in a walk.

People in a live town never boast of its cemetery.

Truth is indeed mighty if it prevails in a horse trade.

One way to break a friendship is to go broke yourself.

Put your worries in pawn, then proceed to lose the ticket.

A pessimist is a fish that believes every worm conceals a hook.

Why do men talk so much about women's talking so much?

Lots of unemployed men would rather find fault than find work.

A man can enjoy reading a mother-in-law joke—if he is a bachelor.

A married man doesn't mind being called down—to a good breakfast.

If your wife thinks she is the whole show, don't tell her what you think.

Some married couples can patch up a quarrel until it looks as good as new.

When a man proclaims in a loud voice that he is a gentleman it's a safe bet he isn't.

The good opinion you have of yourself will not pass you through the pearly gates.

Most men would make a beeline for the tall timber if they saw justice headed their way.

The man who is always on time wastes many valuable hours waiting for the other fellow.

As a fun producer a comedian isn't in it with a henpecked man when he starts out to assert himself.

The woman who marries for convenience soon discovers there is no convenience in marriage.

When a man has no more sense than to ask a girl for a kiss she is perfectly justified in refusing.

Every mother's son of us would be rich if our foresight was one-half as good as our hindsight.

It is difficult to acquire a satisfactory reputation on the strength of what you are going to do some day.

How a woman does enjoy meeting a man she hasn't seen for twenty years and have him say: "Why, you don't look a day older than you did the last time we met."

WANT ADS

Want and Classified Advertising not less than 14 words accepted for Insertion in the Ledger and Blade at 25 cents per word.

AGENTS WANTED

STARK BRO'S, Louisiana, Mo., Big Idea in tree selling. Best terms known to nursery world. Box 80.

TWO Minute Demonstration Makes Every Call a Sale, with large profits. Positively biggest agent's bonanza out. Free sample and particulars, G. V. Sales Co., 15 Spruce st., New York.

POST CARDS—Dealers—90c per 1,000 up. All Kinds. Write for Special List. Gross Onard Co., 2149 Arthur ave., New York.

MONEY by Mail. Start a mail order business. We manage it for you. Send for free, printed matter furnished for half the profits. Write for particulars. Hazen A. Horton, Desk 701, Tekonsha, Mich.

WE WANT 100,000 live agents at once. Big profits and valuable prizes given to our representatives. We ship you all the goods you want on credit. Write at once for particulars. Give references in first letter to save time. Address Credit "A", Box 3383, Boston, Mass.

PORTRAITS—Photo pillow tops, photo china plates, frames, sheet pictures etc., at prices below the lowest and guaranteed. Rejects credited Prompt shipments; 30 days' credit, catalogue and samples free. Jas. C. Bailey Co., 1457 M st., Chicago.

MAN wanted as exclusive agent. We manufacture six styles Self-Wringing Mops, for all purposes, including an absolutely new combination Scrubing Brush that is Self-Wringing Every woman wants this proven success New inexperienced men make $9 per day. One man made $120 the second week. No investment. Send for catalogue and exclusive territory proposition that will make you independent. Hiiker Mop Co., 1214 Grand Ave., Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS, Salesmen—Make good Profit, selling the New Idea Combination Purse, Billfold, Cardcase, Identification Pocket, Memobook, Pencil (all in one) and other Novelties. Sample 50c. S. Robbins, Mfg. Leather Goods, 4104 12th Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.

AGENTS—Make $2.00 each selling our wonderful Luminous Crucifixes; nothing to sell six a day; absolutely new; shine all night in darkest room. Pioneer Portrait Co., 3258 West 63rd street, Chicago.

AGENTS wanted—Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias and Red Men are earning $50.00 weekly selling the above named Charts. Something new. Every member orders his membership Charts. Send $1.00 for samples and terms. Get your home Lodge ahead of other Agents, success guaranteed. Adams Publishing Co., 726, Vin. Av., Indianapolis, Ind.

350% Profit selling Gordon Photo Pillow Tops. High Grade Work. Samples and catalogue Free. Luther Gordon Co., Northwestern Bldg., Chicago.

FREE—$3.00, guaranteed, American made razor given free to one man in each locality, to advertise. Agents wanted. Inclose stamp. Crown Cutlery Co., Dep't B, Ladiesburg, Md.

AGENTS—Handle staple merchandise. "Republic" brands of Men's and Women's plain and initial Handkerchiefs. Factory to Consumer, through you. Established dependable line. Profitable selling Outfit 75c, at wholesale. Write, Republic Mfg. Co., 493 Broadway, New York.

CIGAR Lighter—Just Out—Sells at sight to every smoker and dealer. Sample 10c. Particulars Free. A. Morgan Lighter Co., Cincinnati, Ohio.

SIGN Agents. Flexible gold window letters 1c each. New Designs. Samples free. Beautiful line sign specialties trade emblems. Eastern Specialty Co., Dep't 8, 63 Barclay st., New York.

LOCAL Representative wanted in each town to sell Underwear, Sweaters and Neckties, direct from our factory to wearer. Permanent business, liberal terms, big profits. Every article guaranteed. Steadfast Mills, Dep't K, Cohoes, N. Y.

REMNANT STORE, Cincinnati, Ohio. Greatest Dry Goods Bargains on earth. Agents and storekeepers supplied.

AGENTS on salary or commission. The greatest agent's seller ever produced; every user orders and ink buys it on sight; 200 to 600 per cent profit; one agent's sales amounted to $629 in six days; another $32 in two hours. Monroe Mfg. Co., X., 96 La Crosse, Wis.

AGENTS—Make $10.00 per day. Every man will buy our detachable fur collar. Write for territory. Merchants Fur Co., Chicago, Ill.

MUSICAL

SONG Poems Wanted—Publication secured. Satisfaction guaranteed. D. E. Stoeckel, Mus. Bac., East Alton, Ill.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

START an insurance business of your own. Get rich. Write for particulars. F. R. Foster & Co., Nocona, Texas.

HELP WANTED

SONG Poems Wanted—Send us words or music. Big money made in successful Songs. Illus. Book Free. Hayworth Music Pub. Co., 853 G., Washington, D. C.

AGENTS Make Big Money and become sales managers for our goods. Fast office sellers. Fine profits. Particulars and sample free. One Dip Pen Company, Dep't 16, Baltimore, Md.

EARN your way through College. (Don't pay cash.) Business College or Engineering College. Write Logan Square College, Edgewood ave., Chicago.

FREE Illustrated Book tells about over 360,000 protected positions in U. S. service. More than 40,000 vacancies every year. There is a big chance here for you, sure and generous pay, lifetime employment. Easy to get. Just ask for booklet A 1034. No obligation. Earl Hopkins, Washington, D. C.

LEARN the Barber Trade. Few weeks completes. We control many excellent positions. Tools given. Branches in all leading cities. For information regarding any one, write, Dept. 10, Moler College, 738 South Wabash ave., Chicago, Ill

GOVERNMENT Post Office Examinations everywhere soon. Get prepared by former U. S. Civil Service Examiner. Write for Booklet B. Patterson Civil Service School Rochester, N. Y.

MEN and Women wanted for Government Jobs. $80.00 month. Write for list of positions open. Franklin Institute, Dep't F 31, Rochester, N. Y.

SOUND men, 26 to 40 years old, wanted at once in every State for Electric Railway Motormen and Conductors; $60 to $100 monthly; no experience necessary; fine opportunity; no strike; write immediately for application blank. Address Mgr. Z., 552 Dwight Building, Kansas City, Missouri.

WANTED—Immediately, men and women for Government Positions. Fall Examinations everywhere. Prepare now. Trial Examination Free. Write, Ozment, K, St. Louis.

RESILVERING Mirrors—Best formula ever originated with special instructions for 50 cents. Chas. Smisor, 4001 Drexel Boulevard, Chicago.

SECRET Service Wants Men. Make Thousands of Dollars Yearly. Experience Unnecessary. 10c brings Plans. Address: Secret Service, Marinaville, N. Y.

POEMS wanted. Cash for good talent. Address, Inland Music Company, Chicago.

MALE HELP WANTED

BE EXPERT detective and investigator. Many waiting positions at Big Pay. Stamp for particulars. National Detective Agency, Dep't 273 A., Chicago.

WANTED—Active man in each locality. $50 to $150 a month. Introduce us to your friends. No experience needed. Spare time. Sick, accident and death benefits. Free-Insurance and Cash-Bonus offer sent first applicant from each place. Write the I-L-U 940, Covington, Ky.

I WILL Start You earning $4 daily at home in spare time, silvering mirrors; no capital; free instructive booklet, giving plans of operation. G. F. Redmond, Dep't 400, Boston, Mass.

GOVERNMENT Farmers wanted. $60.00 monthly. Examination Oct. Many needed. Write, Ozment, 68 F., St. Louis, Mo.

RAILWAY Mail Clerks, Carriers, Wanted Good Pay, Fine Positions. Pay for instruction after you receive position. Liberty Institute, Dep't 41, Rochester, N. Y.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

LADIES can make shields at home; $10 per 100; work sent prepaid to reliable women. Particulars for stamped addressed envelope. Eureka Co., Dep't 17, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

MAKE a comfortable living at home sewing plain seams. Any ordinary sewing machine. All, some work. No canvassing. Steady. Sewers wanted in each town. No triflers reply. State how much time can sew. Send ten cents for postage, samples, etc. Returned if not satisfactory. Home Sewers Company, New York Jobbers Sewing, "BL" Dept., Rehoboth, Delaware.

EARN $12 weekly, coloring pictures and postcards. Samples and instructions 20c. Roxbury Card Co., Roxbury, Mass.

WANTED—Apron makers. Send self-addressed stamped envelope. Richards Apron Shop, 1435 East 53rd St., Chicago, Ill.

DOGS, POULTRY, ETC.

BEAGLE Hounds—Trained Hunters and youngsters. Zimmer's, Gloversville, N. Y.

BEAUTIFUL Buff Orpington, Young Trios, $5. Orpington Magazine, 10c year. Chevlot Farms, R. 43, Cincinnati,

REAL ESTATE

FOR SALE—Improved Southern Minnesota farms. Easy terms. Write us for information. Morehart-Atchison Land Co., Mankato, Minn.

FRUIT LANDS—Beautiful Kootenay Valley, B. C., 88 acres, sub-divided into 2 4-acre tracts, 11 of 5-acres and one of 25 acres. The 25-acre tract is improved, has dwelling, stable, ice-house, etc. All for a limited time at the low price of $6,000. Adjoining land held at $200 per acre. Will cost you nothing to write and investigate. Owner forced to realize thereon. ¼ cash, balance easy terms. Only six hours from Spokane, Wash. Pure water, ideal climate and very low taxes. Address D. B. Dulmage, Morgan Park, Illinois.

FARMS FOR SALE

FARMS For Sale in New York State, Dairy, Fruit, Stock and Grain Farms in all sizes and prices. Send for descriptive circulars. C. W. Blanchard, Farm Broker, 212 Kirk Block, Syracuse, N. Y.

PATENTS

PATENTS That Protect—Patent your ideas; they may bring you wealth; 64 page book free. Fitz Gerald & Co., Dept. W, Washington, D. C.

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THE Patentome is interesting and instructive to a liberal education in patents and how to get them. Free on request. Established 1865. Anderson & Son, Patent Solicitors, 713 G st., Washington, D. C

MISCELLANEOUS

SEND twenty-five cents for handsome oxidized Woodrow Wilson watch fob. Kennedy-Brown-Hall Company, Jacksonville, Florida.

BROTHER accidentally discovered root will cure both tobacco habit and indigestion; gladly send particulars. R. O. Stokes, Mohawk, Florida.

BARGAIN—Three fine neckties $1. Gold-plated Pin free. Ties and pin retail at $2.50. This offer is for short time only. Send $1 at once. Money refunded by return mail if not satisfied. Name colors desired. W. C. Watkins, Parnassus, Pa.

NEW book "Kate," 10c. Catalog books and den pictures free. Atoz Co., A-1, West Jefferson, Ohio

LADIES—A $3.50 Marvelous Whirling Spray sent prepaid for $1.98. Every woman should have one. Universal Supply Co., Box 557, Galesburg, Ill.

PERSONAL

MARRY—Best plan on earth, sent free photo of every lady member. The Pilot, Dept. 674, Marshall, Mich.

MARRY Rich—Matrimonial paper of highest character, containing hundreds of photos and descriptions of marriageable people with means; mailed free, sealed; either sex. Wife. One may be your ideal. Standard Cor. Club, Box 607, Grays Lake, Illinois.

MARRIAGE Paper Free; best published for sure results; reliable. Eastern Agency 55, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

MARRY—Photos, descriptions and P. O. addresses of pretty, rich ladies and gents, want to marry, free. H. Jahn, St. Paul, Minn.

LOVING never fails. Every package guaranteed. Either sex 10c. Two packages sealed 20c. Union, Box 100N, Palatine Illinois

MARRY Wealth and beauty. Marriage Directory Free. Every one married. New plan. Ladies send description in first letter. Box 314 B, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY—Book of Descriptions mailed sealed free; many wealthy. The Exchange, Box 525 C, Kansas City, Mo.

SIXTH and Seventh Books of Moses. Long Lost Friend, Black Arts; many other rare books; very interesting book, sent sealed free for 8c postage. Star Novelty Co., E. Camden, New Jersey.

MARRIAGE Paper—Highest Character; Incorporated; 16th year; paper sealed; send 10c. B. W. Love, Box 1600, Denver, Colo.

LAWYERS' Advice, 25 cents. Experienced, Reliable, Guaranteed. Circulars Free. Legal Aid Bureau, Alliance, Ohio.

FREE Life Reading—Advice on all matters. Send birthdate and dime. Professor Franz, Saginaw, Mich.

MARRY—Interesting particulars (10c). Thousands Rich, tired living alone. Grace Hyde, San Francisco, California.

It Rattled Him.

"Women are so impulsive," said an East End man one day. "I was awakened from a sound sleep Sunday morning by my wife crying in an excited manner, 'Henry! Henry! come quick!' I sprang from bed and ran to the head of the stairs and at once smelled smoke. Then I shouted, 'Take the baby, run to the corner and turn in the alarm!' I scrambled back to the room and snatched up some clothes, thinking I'd put them on later. Then I grabbed little Elizabeth, who was sleeping with me, under my arm and dashed downstairs. 'Where is it?' I exclaimed, running here and there to locate the fire. Behold, my wife was sitting in the diningroom with the baby in her lap, as calm as could be, with nothing out of the usual, except a smile of joy on her face.

"'Why don't you get out of here? Do you want to be burned alive?' I shouted.

"'Why, Henry, what in the world's the matter with you? Are you crazy?'

"'No, I'm not crazy. I want to know where the fire is?'

"'Fire! there is no fire,' said she.

"'What did you yell fire for then?'

"'I didn't.'

"'Well, what in thunder is it, then?'

"'Why, Charlotte has a tooth.'

"'Goodness, I thought the house was on fire.'

"'How stupid,' remarked my wife, coolly, as she placed the baby in her high chair and started for the kitchen. 'Why don't you put Elizabeth down? Do you intend to carry her under your arm all day? And you had better get dressed, too; breakfast is almost ready.'"

Hill Didn't Count.

Accompanied by his secretary and certain railroad representatives, James J. Hill had come into the Far West to inspect a new trunk line. When their private car had been sidetracked in one of those famous Rocky Mountain canyons, the tourists got out to see some special feat of engineering adroitness in the vicinity.

A photographer from a near camp scenting a generous fee, soon had the party lined up against the rocks, Mr. Hill standing at the extreme right of the group and his secretary at the left, according to the arrangements of the camera operator, a lantern-jawed mountaineer, who proceeded in leisurely fashion to make a time exposure.

Next day Mr. Hill's secretary glanced his eyes over the picture and noted with some concern that the familiar figure of his employer was missing from the group. He demanded to know why the photographer had made such a blunder.

"Haw, haw!" laughed the Western artists. "That ain't no blunder, mister! I only wanted to take the live ones. That old fellow with side whiskers on the end didn't count, so I left him out!"—Judge.

For Himself.

A rural magistrate, listening to the testimony of the witness, interrupted him, saying: "You said that you made a personal examination of the premises. What did you find?"

"Oh, nothing of consequence," replied the witness; "'a beggarly account of empty boxes,' as Shakespeare says."

"Never mind what Shakespeare said about it," said the magistrate; "he will be summoned to testify for himself if he knows anything about the case."

The rolling stone never gets to the top.

Our Boys' Corner

Boy Scout Adventures

Or, Lost in the Everglades

By St. George Rathborne

[Copyright 1912 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

Begun in No. 36, September 7. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER IX.

MORE TROUBLE.

TWO apiece all around, and one left for manners!" laughed Amos, as he paddled the teetering little canvas collapsible alongside the power-boat.

"Bully! No danger of our starving while a shell remains for our gun. And they look like pretty fair ducks, too, brother," remarked the other, as he weighed the bunch of game in his hand.

"Look at that, will you?"

"Excuse me from shooting out of such a pesky cranky boat as this, though. Makes a fellow feel as if he were on the back of a bucking broncho. Came the nearest kind to upsetting when I let go the second time," and Amos shook his head as he changed from the dinghy to the larger boat, securing the former's painter to a cleat, so that it would drift astern.

They immediately set to work to skin a brace of the ducks. It was a new business for both, and they made rather slow work, but finally the job was accomplished. Presently the game had been dismembered, and was stewing over the little Jewel gas stove, with a merry bubble and an appetizing odor.

With the spirit of securing supplies still strong upon him, Dolph had baited a couple of hooks with small bits of meat, and cast his fishing lines overboard. He was presently rewarded with a bite, and hauled in a struggling captive.

"Look at that, would you?" he cried, holding the wriggling prisoner aloft for Amos, who was once more "fiddling" with the engine, to see. "It never rains but it pours. Another like that, and we'll have a feast of fresh fish for breakfast tomorrow."

Perhaps the mate of the first was hovering near, and could not bear to be separated from its companion; for long ere supper was ready he had hooked an excellent duplicate of the one already taken. After that he quit the game.

"I'm no hog, I tell you," Dolph declared; "and know when to stop. No use running a winning horse to death. And besides, I don't want to sink this old craft with too big a load of supplies."

"Nor do I like to have fish hanging around too long," declared Amos. "Here, just slip 'em both in this box. I'll fasten a stout cord to the same, and we can let it float all night. Then in the morning we'll have fish fresh out of the water, instead of stale ones."

"Now, that's what I call a real bright thought," declared Dolph, with sincere admiration in his voice; "you're always long on that kind of thing. I do believe that if ever there was a boy fashioned by nature to make a crackerjack of a Scout, his name is Amos Shackelford, and he hails from the Michigan Peninsula."

"Let up on that, will you?" demanded his cousin, pretending to frown, though of course the flattery was sweet to his boyish heart. "I told you that the more I learn, the greater the mountain of what I don't know seems to rise up. There never lived a boy who could carry it all in his head. Sometimes I think after all that I'm just an ignoramus."

"Thanks. That's putting me on a mighty low level. But I know you don't mean all you say. How is that stew getting on?" asked Dolph, sniffing the air, and then rubbing his stomach as though his appetite had begun to grow clamorous.

After all it did prove quite a fine dish. A few potatoes had been dropped in, cold ones left over from a previous meal; and these served to thicken the stew. Besides, the boys had been shy on fresh meat now for some time; and a change is always relished when living in the open.

"Do you notice how much warmer it is tonight?" asked Dolph, as they sat there in the gloaming, unable to finish quite all that had been provided.

Amos made some vigorous movements with his hands.

"Yes, and I also take note of the fact that the bugs are in a playful mood. That makes half a dozen I've smacked after they tasted me; and they are the most ferocious skeeters I ever saw," he remarked.

"It's good we brought that cheesecloth net along. They told us we couldn't expect to live here without it. Suppose we light up, and see what smoke will do toward driving 'em away," ventured Dolph.

Both boys, like most of their kind, had taken to smoking. They had brought

(Continued on page twenty-one)

Velvet

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In the big, red moisture-proof Velvet can there are *two full ounces* of pure, clean smoking—made from carefully selected *middle* leaves of choice Burley that have been well *aged.*

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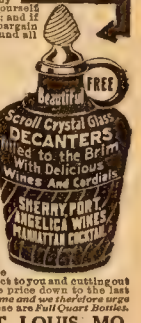

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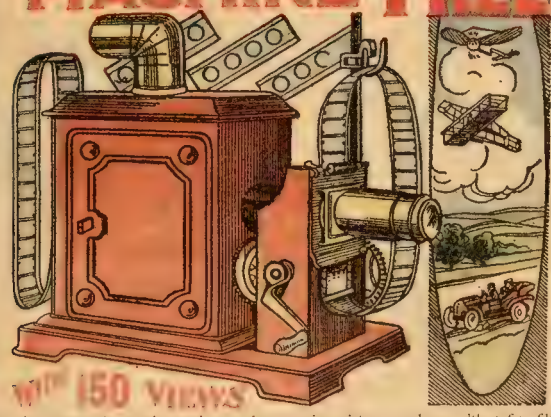

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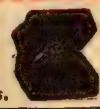

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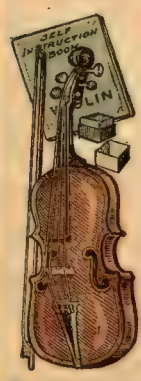

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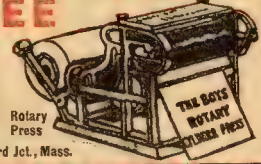

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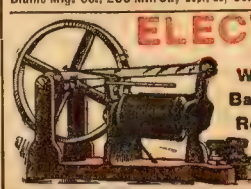

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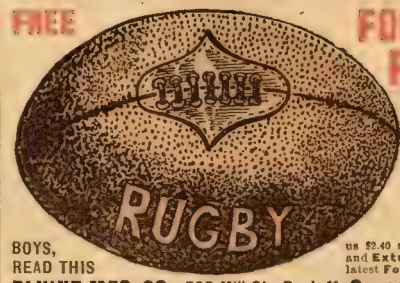

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Boy Scout Adventures.

(Continued from page nineteen.)

pipes along, though only occasionally indulging, for the habit had not yet taken a strong hold upon them. The fumes of the weed had some effect upon the swarms of mosquitoes that hovered around; but they soon realized that, with not a breath of wind stirring, they faced a siege.

In vain did they get up several times during the night to adjust the bar; there always seemed to be some gap through which the villainous little pests found entrance; and taken as a whole the cruisers passed a wretched night. Consequently both were glad to see the dawn, when with the coming of a stir in the stagnant atmosphere their tormentors forsook the battle.

"Wow! that was a horror, sure enough," grunted Dolph, as he washed away the various bloodstains from his face and hands, showing where he had slain his adversaries in his savage assaults; "and I'll be the happiest boy alive when we get out of this inland waterbog. Me for the salt water, the oysters, the pompano, the red-snapper, the sheepshead, the shrimp! My mouth fairly waters for such delicacies. No more inland voyages for me as long as I live."

"Well, those things do have a pleasant sound," remarked Amos; "but you'll find just as many insect pests along the coast. Remember that night the sand flies devoured us? You said they beat anything you had ever seen."

"Yes, I suppose every Paradise has its drawbacks; but then there's nearly always a breeze on salt water, you know," declared Dolph.

Their breakfast delayed them some little time, for the fish had to be cleaned, and then cooked. As they had only one flame the coffee had to wait until the main course was ready.

"Nothing like a little style," laughed Amos. "After-dinner coffee you know."

About nine o'clock they sadly took to rowing once more. Dolph had whistled until his breath gave out, hoping for a wind, and most reluctantly followed the suggestion of his chum that they make an ashen one. The day proved warm, too, so that they felt pretty well wilted by the time noon crept around.

"See any change?" asked Dolph, despairingly, as he dropped his oar and took out his red bandanna handkerchief to mop off the steaming face.

Amos stood up before replying, and looked eagerly ahead. Then he shook his head in the negative.

"Same old prospect all around us," he remarked. "If we were lost in the heart of the Sahara it couldn't seem more dreary. I begin to feel just like you said you did, and never again for me in this blooming Everglades country. Once for me is over the fence and out."

"But how about wind—that would help some?" continued the other, entreatingly.

"Never a ripple. You'd think it couldn't blow again in a year, from the way the water lies. But perhaps, along by two o'clock, there may come a change."

There did. While possibly Amos did not mean to advance any claims toward being a weather prophet, he certainly hit it that time.

They were pulling along in a dogged fashion around half-past two, when suddenly a low grumbling sound came to their ears that made them stop and stare.

Was that a 'gator bull bellowing somewhere?" demanded Dolph; for they had heard such a sound early on a morning when still upon the upper reach of the Miami River, and neither of them would soon forget it.

"At this time of day—well, they told us a 'gator only bellowed at night, or just at dawn, never later."

"Then could it have been—thunder?" pursued Dolph.

They happened to be skirting a hedge of tall grass at the time, that shut out their view of the southwestern sky. So Amos used his oar to push on to what seemed like an opening. Before they reached this place once more the distant grumbling came floating to their ears, and this time a little louder.

"Thunder, sure! We're going to have a storm for a change. I might have known it after such a hot day," declared Dolph.

Amos was already clambering to his feet. "Whew!" he ejaculated, "it's as black as ink down there. And the clouds are pushing up this way like fun. No time to be lost, if we want to escape a ducking. Get the anchor—over. Back of this grass is as good a place as we can find; though it's little protection that will afford us, I'm afraid."

They hastened to get things in readiness for the coming gale. As they worked, the booming of thunder grew louder, until it was simply terrific.

"And to think that this is January, too," said Amos, who had possibly never known such a thing before in all his life.

The good old tarpaulin was finally buttoned securely all around the boat, and raised sufficiently to allow of their moving about underneath.

"There, let her swoop down on us," declared Dolph, when the job was completed; "I reckon we can stand it out; but oh! I hope this doesn't mean another cold norther to follow," with a shiver of apprehension.

"Ten to one it does. By morning we'll be shaking out of our boots once more; and the supply of oil isn't going to last forever," said Amos.

"What sillies!" declared his cousin, with a groan. "Catch me ever going away from dry land again. Just think what a difference it would make if we could only have a bouncing big roaring fire. Why, just the thought of it makes me feel good! I've had my lesson, and it's rubbed in good and hard. I'm a dry land sailor from now on."

Then came the rain driving down with the new wind, until it beat on the canvas cover just above their heads with a roaring sound. Of course that lasted but a short time. But the wind kept up, and caused the disabled power-boat to dance up and down like a cork on the water.

The tall grass bent down before the gale, so that it afforded them hardly any protection at all. Still, the waves were broken in such a way that it was much better than being on an open stretch of water. They faced another bad night, and Dolph groaned at the prospect.

"First it's heat and skeeters; next comes a howling storm that knocks sleep all to flinders. That's what I call rubbing it in good and hard," he said, as they prepared to cuddle down the best the conditions allowed.

But little sleep came to them that night. Just as Amos had predicted, the wind soon changed into the northwest, and by morning their old friend the norther had again taken the helm, blowing steadily from the region of snow and ice.

All day long they had to stand it the best they could. Amos discovered that by changing their anchorage they might better the conditions a little, and as every little helped, they hastened to do this. At noon, having nothing better to occupy their attention, they cooked the other three ducks, making a grand big mess.

"It'll do for supper, too; and only need warming up," as Dolph remarked. "Besides, this heat under the awning is just the boss."

Amos lifted the can that held his oil, and shook it ruefully.

"Ain't empty is it?" cried his chum, as if horror-stricken at the possibility of such a dire calamity.

"Oh, no! A few more quarts yet; but we must go slow. Perhaps it may do after a couple of days or so yet," replied the other, solemnly.

"Then let us hope and pray that by that time we'll be where we can go ashore, and make a fire worth having. Oh! happy day! How I wish it was now!" and Dolph sighed heavily as he spoke.

When evening came Amos took an observation, but reported that the wind seemed just as savage as ever.

"Why, we'll freeze to death yet!" cried Dolph, shuddering.

"Oh! I hope not quite so bad as that," laughed his cousin, as he prepared to make a nest for himself, looking forward to another wild night of it.

And when he took his last observation through the loose end of the tarpaulin, the whitecaps were rushing past, whipped by the savage wind, and the howl of the norther sounded as all the world like a heavy train climbing a grade. And then Amos passed into dreamland.

CHAPTER X.

UNDER THE PALMETTOES.

"Hello, there! Wake up, Amos!"

A rush of cold air accompanying the call served to arouse the sleeper, who

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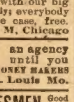

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bounced erect, to find Dolph climbing out of the shelter.

"Why, I slept pretty good in spite of the old boat wobbling around!" exclaimed the Michigan boy, rubbing his eyes, and stretching afterward. "How's the weather out there, brother?"

"Same old thing; but seems to me the wind is shifting just a little into the northeast; because, I noticed last night where it came from. Perhaps we're going to get a change by noon, Amos," came the answer.

"I hope so," declared the other; and he too climbed out to take an observation.

"What do you say?" asked Dolph, who had great faith in his comrade's weatherwise opinions.

"It's working around that way, and is blowing weaker right now. If it keeps on, I honestly believe we can get our sail to working before long, Dolph."

They took their time with breakfast, since there was no need of any hurry. Some hours must elapse, at least, before they could make a move. Just as they had hoped the wind did continue to shift. At half-past ten it was coming out of the northeast, and far less vicious.

"Let's get a move on," suggested the impatient Dolph. "I've sure seen all I want of this particular bunch of grass."

"Come, don't look a gift horse in the mouth. It's done a good turn, and after all we might have been worse off. But I'm with you, old fellow."

They only raised a portion of the rude sail, for the wind was still strong, and their makeshift mast could not stand much. Away they sped over the surface of the water.

"Hey! This is something like!" shouted Dolph, in great glee; for motion meant progress with him, and everything else stagnation.

Even Amos was ready to declare that the excitement savored of more or less gratification, after their long anchorage. There were times when he had his hands full holding the boat on a straight course; but on the whole they were making good, and this pleased them very much. When several hours had passed, Dolph began to calculate on how many miles they must have covered since leaving their anchorage.

"How wide do you reckon these Everglades run?" he asked. "Because it seems to me we must have crossed the whole peninsula by this time."

"Well, hardly," laughed his mate; "you see we've been heading west at first, and then no'west. But I agree with you that it's sure high time we sighted land."

After that Dolph spent much of his time on deck and straining his eyes to look ahead, in the hope of discovering signs of the wished-for haven of rest. There was something in the air that prevented him from seeing as clearly as he would have liked; but about three in the afternoon he raised a shout.

"I reckon we're getting there, partner!" he whooped, in great excitement, and even giving signs of wanting to dance a hornpipe there in the bows.

"Then you've glimpsed the shore line, I take it?" inquired Amos.

"Yes, I had a good sight of it, though just now the plagued sun glitter hides everything again. Here, let me hold the wheel, and you take a squint," with which Dolph dropped alongside his chum.

"Well, as the wind is falling rapidly, soon there won't be much use for anybody to hold the wheel. And unless all signs fail I guess it'll be a case of our making the last leg under bare oars," observed Amos, climbing out.

He had to stand there fully ten minutes before a shift of conditions allowed him to see what his chum had had revealed to him.

"Yes, that's land, all right, and we've reached the western end of the Everglades, beyond question," he said, decidedly.

"Hurrah! The longest lane has a turning. We must get ashore tonight, no matter what work lies ahead of us. Are we heading right for it?" demanded the one at the steering apparatus.

"Turn a little more into the west. That will bring us to the land sooner, you see. Now the grass shuts out the view again, but it's all right, Dolph; we're near the border of the big grassy sea."

In twenty minutes the breeze grew feeble indeed. A short time later and they were almost becalmed. That settled Dolph, the impatient one.

"We can't stand this inaction," he remarked, jumping forward to remove the sail. "What if another storm drove us back again to where we started from. No, sir; it's shore leave for me tonight, no matter if every muscle in my body gets sore from the pulling. Yo-heave-o! Here we go!"

They made pretty rapid time at first, while both were fresh. By degrees, however, the pace lagged, and finally dropped back into that steady grind. Still they must be making progress, and ought to be satisfied with the prospect ahead. Dolph made it a point every half-hour to drop his oar, and go up for an observation. Sometimes he grumbled because they did not seem to be getting on as fast as he would wish; but his reports seemed most hopeful to Amos, especially when he spoke of seeing palmettoes ashore.

The afternoon was rapidly slipping away, and the sun dropping lower toward the western horizon. Even Amos could see the land now, from where he sat.

"It isn't more than half a mile away, I do believe?" said Dolph.

"And we'll make it a little after sundown," affirmed the other, who had been calculating the distance, as well as their rate of progress.

"Look at that ripple over there!" cried Dolph. "Wouldn't it be fine now if the breeze took a notion to crop up again, just to give us a rest before we touched?"

In five minutes there was a nice little zephyr blowing, and causing tiny ripples to chase along the water's surface.

"Let's make a change, Amos!" pleaded the Carolina boy, whose back fairly ached under the stress of several hours' rowing the heavy boat. Amos was agreed, for he, too, believed the breeze had come to stay. So once more the oars were rigged up to serve in lieu of a mast, and the old tarpaulin fastened in such fashion that it caught every bit of moving air.

What little there was of the wind proved favorable, since it came out of the east. At any rate, their progress would be fully as good as when they were working, and it saved them more sore muscles. Besides, the change allowed both boys to sit facing the welcome sight ahead, and hence they could feast their eyes on the broadening shore line toward which they were being slowly wafted.

The sun sank behind the land, and both boys declared that it was the most gorgeous sight they had ever seen. Perhaps it looked additionally fine to them because it was land, and not the everlasting water, back of which the king of day dropped. And about twenty minutes later Amos ran the nose of the power-boat up on what seemed to be a lovely little beach.

"Go slow this time, old chap," warned the pilot, as he saw Dolph ready to take a flying leap over the bow.

But the other had been wise to notice that the beach for the space of several yards or more was quite clear, and that he would be taking no chances of jumping on a six-foot diamondback rattler. The boat was pulled up safe and sound, and the anchor thrown still farther ashore. Dolph was wild to get a fire started, though he capered about on that small beach for several minutes, just to "unloosen the kinks," as he said. Presently a blaze flashed up, and the start was made. After that it was only a case of adding fuel, of which there was a never-failing supply close at hand.

They determined to make a night of it, bringing the tarpaulin ashore, and sleeping on the ground for a change. In half an hour the camp began to look like business, and Amos even started getting supper; for three times a day this matter of supplying the fuel for the engine occupies much time and attention whenever healthy boys are living in the open. Later on they sat near the cheery blaze, feasting their eyes on the jumping flames, and enjoying the evening meal.

"Looks like a good place for a deer, don't you think?" remarked Dolph.

"I wouldn't be surprised if we did scare one up in the morning," returned the other; "and from the way you talk I guess you're still hankering after some fresh meat. Well, a venison steak would just suit me right now, though this dried beef, cooked with milk, and the corn to keep company, seems all right. Then this Ceylon tea, for a change, goes right to the spot."

"Oh! don't think for a minute I'm complaining at all. Fact is I'm just too happy at having my trilbies on hard ground again to kick at anything. Reckon I wasn't cut out for a sailor. I like the water, but I love the land. And how fine it does feel not to have the thing wobbling up and down under you! No more sleeping for me aboard the Vixen, if I know it."

As both of them were exceedingly tired, and suffering from lack of sleep, it can readily be understood that they did not sit up late that night. Dolph set the fire promised to keep more or less blaze during the remainder of the night; and every time one of them chanced to awaken it might be noticed that the desire to peep out of their rude tent and glimpse the campfire proved irresistible.

Then came another morning, one of those charming dawns that Florida boasts, and which is always the finer after the passing of a norther, since the air seems to have been purified to a wonderful degree. Those who have experienced these early mornings in Florida can never forget their charm.

"I tell you what we'll do," remarked Amos, as they sat there breaking their fast; "you take your Marlin, and see if you can get some meat. But be sure you have your compass along; and don't lose yourself on any account."

"And what will you be doing?" asked Dolph, quite satisfied with the program.

"Me? Oh! I'll be fixing up the camp

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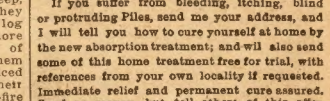

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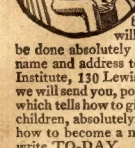

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a bit, for we'll stay here until tomorrow, you know. Then perhaps I may try my hand at fishing, for the water looks likely over yonder. And I also want to take another turn at that pesky engine. Seems as if I just ought to get it working again; but every time I miss connections."

"I hope you make the ripple, old fellow. It would be just like it to get her going, now that the worst of the trip is over. But still, don't hold back on that account. There are lots of miles yet to be covered, and it would be a great saving of muscle."

Dolph overhauled his pet rifle carefully before starting out, for he did not know but what it might have become rusty during their long voyage on the water. A liberal application of vaseline, however, had prevented this; and in a moist climate, like that of Florida, one cannot be too careful about frequent overhauling of such things as guns and machinery.

"Here goes, then," he said, finally, as he arose after fastening his leggings, for they serve as fine protectors against the many thorny edges of leaves in the brush.

"Keep an eye out for snakes as well as deer. And don't forget our signal code," were the last instructions Amos called out; for he was already getting his fish lines in readiness for business.

An hour passed. Nothing had been heard from the woods into which Dolph had plunged. The keeper of the camp had already made quite a fine haul of fish, proving that his suppositions were correct; and one of them to his surprise had been a fairly large big-mouth black bass, known locally as a "green trout."

He began to cast uneasy glances toward the undergrowth, as though a suspicion might have started to take hold of him concerning the possibility of Dolph's getting lost, after all. Then he heard a rather distant shot, followed by a second.

"Thank goodness there wasn't a third one," muttered Amos; for that would have meant that he was in trouble, and needed help. I told him that if he had to fire three times at a deer, to follow with a fourth shot. So perhaps he's got something. I hope so, anyhow. They say the deer down here are little chaps, so he won't have much trouble bringing it in, if he has been lucky enough to knock one over. So here's to wait in hopes. Meanwhile I'll tackle that pesky engine again."

This thrilling story of youthful adventure will be concluded in the next issue of the Ledger. A lot of strange and exciting things happen. Read it. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you if you send in a year's subscription. It costs only $1.00 and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

Better Be a Farmer.

A man who owns eighty acres of land, and has sense enough to till it, makes the best of country newspaper men look like the last sad remnants of a Dutch lunch," says the Olathe Register. "The farmer has the best of it all around. He is as independent as an express company. He doesn't have to write a soulful obituary over some peak-headed fellow that keeps on display an exhibit of cut-plug profanity that would make the efforts of the stenchest mate sound like the meeting of the Epworth League. He doesn't have to go into raptures over the beauty of an open-face bride with a cast of countenance that would blow out the gas. The farmer isn't required to lie until his back teeth fall out about the sterling manhood of a bridegroom with ears like a cauliflower plant and the brain power of a yearling shoat. He doesn't have to run a contest for the most popular young woman in the community, make everybody sore, and then print a 75-cent halftone of the beauty that looks like a tintype of grandma at the age of 13."

"Neither does the editor," says the Modern Light, "but he most always does."

Education a Failure.

Senator Robert L. Owen, of Oklahoma, whose mother was a Cherokee Indian, stirred up some excitement down Oklahoma way in one of the first lawsuits he ever tried.

The opposing counsel saw fit to call Owen a liar.

Owen got up and addressed himself to the Court in about this language:

"Inasmuch as the Court has done nothing to maintain its own dignity, and as I am amply able to take care of myself, I shall take this affair into my own hands."

Then he turned to the lawyer across the table, and remarked to him, in a loud voice that he was both a liar and a blackguard, and that, furthermore, he could just take that, and that, and that! Whereupon the opposing counsel fell to the floor as one man. Owen had used only his fist, but everybody in the courtroom fled, not knowing when bullets might be in the air.

After the affair was over the lawyer who had called Owen a liar stood on the front steps of the courthouse and observed to a couple of friends:

"I was never much in favor of educating these Cherokee boys, anyhow!"

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It is not only the saving of money that has given us 200,000 delighted customers. It's the greater beauty, convenience, fuel economy and durability of every Kalamazoo Stove or Range. Also our prompt delivery and liberal treatment.

Write for Catalog of 400 Stoves and 30 Days' Free Trial

Don't pay the middleman $5.00 to $40.00 extra. Let us save you that much. Return a Kalamazoo after a year's use if our claims are not true. What dealer will do that? Send postal now for Catalog No. 498, and please mention this paper.

Kalamazoo Stove Co., Manufacturers, Kalamazoo, Mich.
Ask for Furnace or Gas Stove Book too, if interested.

Clothing Salesmen Wanted

$150.00 Per Month and expenses made by all our active men selling our popular line of clothing. **No experience necessary—no capital required**—no commission plan—no house to house canvass. You regulate your profits to suit yourself. This is high grade employment at high wages.

Nearly All Our Men Make $40.00 Every Week in the Year Our Plan: We ship by prepaid express big outfit of cloth samples, lithograph fashion plates, tape measure, order blanks, advertising matter, **everything free.** We operate the largest mills in the U.S. and sell goods cheaper than any other house in the **world.** Finest tailored, all wool suits, $7.50 up. No difficulty getting orders at these prices. **Everything guaranteed.** Don't buy a suit or overcoat anywhere at any price until you see our amazing offer and biggest, lowest priced clothing line in U.S.

THE OLD WOOLEN MILLS CO. Adams and Market Sts. Department 201 **CHICAGO**

This Handsome Brass Clock

Actual Size

FREE!

THE NEWEST

—AND—

BEST OFFER

This handsome brass clock is a time meter that will grace your table or mantel piece with beauty and adornment. It is made of brass with the brush brass finish. The dial is plain white and, as you see, the hands are gracefully designed to point to the hours and minutes in the plainest manner. The glass covering the dial is beveled and thick so that it can stand rough handling. The works are especially imported and have a thirty-two hour movement, that is, it needs to be wound only once in thirty-two hours.

The stands holding the clock up are also of brass, secure and very strong. In the back the winding and setting screws are well made and are large enough so that your fingers can reach them. The whole clock is designed to combine the best time keeping in the neatest and most compact form possible. But, above all—

WE ABSOLUTELY GUARANTEE IT

against defects, for this clock is thoroughly tested, examined and regulated before it leaves the factory, and if there are any defects in the material and workmanship, you can return it at once at our expense.

It will look well on your mantel-piece or on your table among your best things. Hour after hour, year after year it faithfully performs its duty of telling you the correct time.

With this little mountain of dependability you will be on time for your appointments and always have a standard time-piece in your house for your whole family to set their watches by.

This is, indeed the most beautiful and valuable premium we have offered, and this offer will appeal to thousands of our readers, for this clock is **absolutely free.**

Read Below How to Get the Clock Free, and get it at once, for we are able to make this big offer only through a lucky purchase and the supply is limited.

How to Get the Beautiful Brass Clock Free

There are four ways to get this clock FREE. The first way is to send us $2.00 for a year's subscription to The Saturday Blade and Chicago Ledger together, and on receipt of your subscription, we will send you this handsome brass clock free, all charges prepaid.

The second way is: If you prefer either one of these great papers for yourself get some friend to send their subscription to either one of the papers along with yours and send us the $2.00, and we will send you the clock absolutely free, all charges prepaid. Of course, your friend would not be entitled to the clock, but the good value of the Blade and Ledger should appeal enough to induce your friend to give you the subscription.

The third way is, if any of your friends do not wish to subscribe for the paper for a whole year, you may send in two six-months' subscriptions along with your yearly subscription and we will send the clock to you all charges prepaid.

The fourth way is, if you do not know some friend who is willing to send a subscription to either the Blade or Ledger along with yours send your own subscription for the paper that you want for two years.

We Treat Old and New Subscribers Alike on This Offer.

If you are already a subscriber to the Blade and Ledger send us $2.00 and we will renew your subscription for one year from the time it expires. If you only take one of the papers and do not care to take the other send us $2.00 to renew your subscription for two years, and we will send the clock.

Don't fail to take advantage of this offer, for it is one of the best offers made. You will realize when you get the clock what a beautiful time piece it is.

With your order just say you want the Brass Clock.

SUBSCRIPTION DEPARTMENT, W. D. BOYCE CO.,
500 Dearborn Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

Canada Subscription price: Blade and Ledger $3 a year. Either paper, $1.50 a year.

BOYS! **Earn $1.00 to $5.00 a Week**

selling the **BLADE** and **LEDGER.** These are the two greatest papers published and people in every town want to have some one they can buy them from each week. We give you two cents out of each nickle you take in. You don't send us any money until you sell the papers. You sell the papers on Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings. It is easy to sell them and get steady customers. You can send back the headings of all papers you can't sell, and we won't charge you for them. You can't LOSE. Be one of the boys who make steady money each week, and **OWN A PAPER ROUTE OF YOUR OWN.** Just fill out the blank below and we will send you a complete agent's outfit and a letter telling you just how to sell the papers and what to say. We tell you exactly how to get customers. It is easy. GET THE JOB BEFORE SOME OTHER BOY BEATS YOU!

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I want to sell the BLADE and LEDGER. Please send me.....papers.

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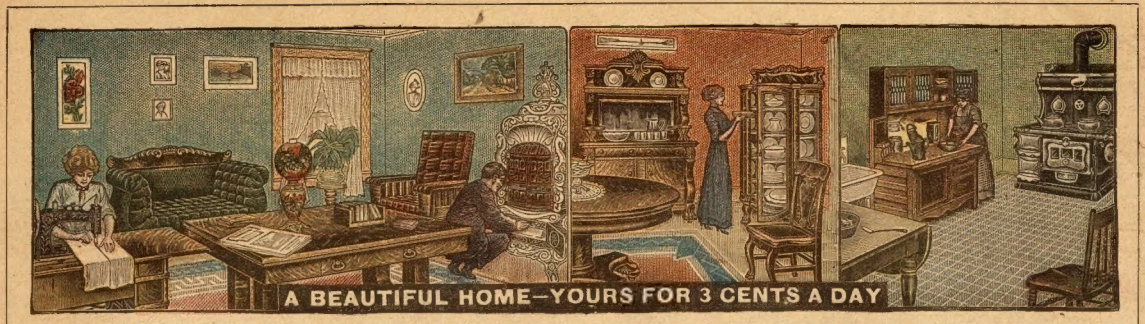


Two Samples of Our Bargains

Our Bargain Book shows 4,528 big bargains like these in everything you need for the home.

They are no bigger bargains than every other item shown in our book. We illustrate them here simply because we were unable to buy them in big enough quantities to show in our catalog. The readers of this paper have first chance at them. There are only 1,450 Oak Heaters offered for sale and 750 davenports. These, of course, will not last long.

If you wish one of these Oak Heaters, just send 75c with your order and we will ship it immediately, without red tape or delay, on 30 days' approval. If you are pleased with it in every way, 50c monthly pays for it. If you don't like it for any reason whatever, you may send it back.

It is the same with the davenport. $2.25 with your order brings it for 30 days approval. 90c a month pays for it if you keep it, and in addition, because the order amounts to over $10.00, you get the Half Silver Set—worth $1.50—absolutely free.

These are two unusual values, and if you have any need of them you should order immediately. Anyway, be sure to get our New Fall Bargain Book, also our Free Big Stove Book.

Guaranteed Oak Heater $3.65

The Advance Empire is a guaranteed Oak Heater, made under contract in one of the Empire stove foundries under our own specifications. We know the quality of every pound of material entering into this stove and guarantee it to meet every requirement.

Send Only 75c With Your Order and this little beauty will be placed in your home on 30 days' trial and approval, where you can put it to every test. If you keep it, pay for it a little a month; otherwise you return it and get your money back.

Fire Pot Is Full Size, made very heavy, of the finest stove plate iron. It is corrugated, insuring great durability and giving large heating surface. Thus you get a surprising amount of heat with a small amount of fuel.

Ash Pit is large, perfectly tight and equipped with a large ash pan. Ash pit door is fitted air-tight, equipped with nickel screw regulator and self-closing catch, and two screw dampers, which give perfect control of the fire at all times.

The Steel Body is bolted to the fire pot with castiron pot ring on top and is cemented to the fire pot, making it absolutely impossible for the fire to expand and to allow ashes or smoke to come out around the joints. Every part is carefully joined and the stove is scientifically built throughout to give the greatest amount of heat.

High-Grade Silver Nickel is used to decorate this Advance Empire Oak Heater. Ready for immediate delivery. Must be ordered direct from this advertisement to be had at this price.

No. 13C365. Width of fire pot 10 inches, height 42 inches. Price..... **$3.65**

No. 13C545. Width of fire pot 12 inches, height 44 inches. Price..... **$5.45**

No. 13C675. Width of fire pot 14 inches, height 46 inches. Price..... **$6.75**

Our New Free Book

Shows 4,528 Bargains on Credit

Send us the coupon below before November 1st and we will mail you—entirely free—our mammoth Bargain Book. It pictures 4,528 new bargains for the home. It shows the largest variety of house-furnishings ever brought together. It quotes prices way below store prices. It offers the longest time credit on easy, pleasant terms.

We will send, with the book, an order for this splendid silver set. This set will be shipped with the things you order, as described in this announcement. But you must send the coupon before November 1st, for on that date this offer ends forever.

All On Credit

Our plan makes it easy for everyone to have a nice, cozy and comfortable home, with all the usual hardship of "pinching and scraping" cut out. With every customer we open a charge account, which means a new-style credit.

We charge no interest—ask no security. There is no red tape or publicity, no contract, no mortgage, no extra price for credit.

No matter who you are, where you live or what you earn, you are welcome to credit here. We have such accounts with a million homes now where the income runs from $9 to $16 weekly. You are just as welcome to credit here as any of these million others, and we will make everything just as agreeable for you.

30 Days' Trial

All goods are sent on 30 days' approval, and you may return anything you don't like. We pay the freight both ways on anything not wanted—the trial costs you nothing. You don't have to make up your mind on anything on the spur of the moment. You keep the things in your home for an entire month before you decide about buying. Then, if price and articles are not satisfactory, you send them back. This insures against mistakes and disappointment.

A Year To Pay

We allow on the average a year to pay. The payments are divided into monthly sums, and even on a good sized order these amounts are so small that a few pennies a day is sufficient to take care of them. All the time you are paying you have the use and enjoyment of the home comforts that you buy. You are enabled to get everything you need at one time. Then things match up nicely and old, shabby pieces and nice new pieces need not be put together. You have the biggest sort of variety. You are able to satisfy your taste, because we show such a tremendous assortment that you can get absolutely the very things you want.

Save One-Half

We guarantee to save you under store prices from 30 to 50 per cent. This is not a mere promise, because if you are not convinced of the saving you know you may send your purchase back.

We are bargain hunters for over a million people now. These people come to us year after year for all the things they need for their homes. This year we went into the market heavier than ever. No stock was too big or too little, if the **price and quality were right.** We packed our factories, foundries and warehouses full with choicest bargains. Every one of them guaranteed 15 to 50 per cent below store prices.

Don't Overlook These Big Bargains

Furniture
Stoves
Sewing Machines
Carpets and Rugs
Draperies
Lamps—Guns
Silverware
Chinaware
Baby Carriages
Toys—Clocks

Our separate Stove Book shows the whole Empire line—420 stoves and ranges in 120 of the latest styles.

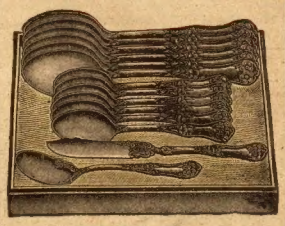
Be Sure to Get Our Big Free Stove Book

Read How You May Get This Free Silver Set

Spiegel, May, Stern Co.

1213 West 35th Street, Chicago

FREE $3.00 Silver Set



Full Set Consists of

6 Tea Spoons **Butter Knife**
6 Table Spoons **Sugar Shell**

This handsome 14-piece Silver Set is made by the Wm. Rogers Mfg. Co., of the highest grade, good heavy nickel silver metal, finely finished and thoroughly warranted not to wear off. The beautiful flower design is nicely embossed on all pieces. Comes in a fancy box.

Half Set, Worth $1.50

6 Tea Spoons **Butter Knife**
Sugar Shell

This half set contains eight pieces of the same fine design and high quality as the full set described above.

Our Celebration Gift

We lately ended our 47th year with a million charge accounts. And to celebrate this fact—our lifetime's ambition—we offer this gift to you.

With every Home Lovers' Bargain Book mailed before November 1st we enclose an order for this Silver Gift.

It calls for the full set—a $3 set—entirely free, to be shipped with any order for $20 or over, received and accepted before December 1st next. Or it calls for the half set—a $1.50 set—to be shipped with any order for $10 or over within the same time.

Our credit terms call for a first payment of $3 on a $20 purchase and $1.50 on a $10 purchase. The balance is paid as convenient.

So, on any $10 or $20 order, the Silver Set—sent entirely free—is worth the whole first payment. Think of that!

Act at Once

This offer is made for this month only. This beautiful present will never be offered again.

You can always get these prices here—always the same easy terms. But the order for the Silver Set goes only with catalogs mailed before November 1st.

So, cut out this coupon now, before you forget it. If you want our big Empire Stove Book, ask for that, too. Mark the books you want and mail the coupon today. Get the book early so that you may have your things right away, enjoy and use them while you pay for them and make your home prettier and cozy for the cold winter weather to come.

Davenport Sofa Bed

12.50 Genuine Fabricord Leather

Both Davenport and Sofa Bed, with all the beauty of a parlor davenport and all the comfort of a bed. It is simple to make the change into a bed or back again. This article is a special bargain.

The Frame is made of extra heavy oak on arms and front posts, thoroughly seasoned and kiln-dried. Front rails and panels under arms are American quarter-sawed oak, beautifully flaked and highly finished. The design is Colonial. The broad front posts taper in heavy, massive claw feet. The serpentine front and top add to the attractiveness.

The Fabricord Leather Upholstering is diamond tufted and guaranteed to give the utmost satisfaction. The bed construction in the seat is of the highest type. The oil-tempered springs are securely hand-tied and anchored to the frame and over these is placed a duck covering to prevent the filling from sifting through. Shipping weight 230 pounds. Ready for immediate delivery.

No. 13C1250. Price..... $12.50

SPIEGEL, MAY, STERN CO.
1213 W. 35th Street, Chicago

Mail me without charge your

- ☐ Fall Bargain Book.
- ☐ Fall Stove Catalog.
- ☐ Fall Jewelry Book.

Also Order for Free Silver Set.

Write name and address clearly. Check which book you want. All will be sent if you want them. (291)

NOTICE TO BOYCE'S WEEKLIES' READERS: The Spiegel, May, Stern Company, whose announcement appears above, was the first concern to offer credit on household goods to honest people no matter where they lived. In their 47 years experience, they have furnished over a million homes, and as a result are known all over the country as The Old Reliable Credit House. Their Free $3 Silver Set Offer is a specially liberal one and every reader of this paper, who wants to have nice home comforts, by laying aside a few cents a day, ought to use the coupon above and get their Big Home Lover's Bargain Book at once, showing 4,528 beautiful things for the home.